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*H. Cotton*

A  
**LETTER**  
TO  
**HIS GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK,**  
ON THE  
PRESENT CORRUPT STATE  
OF THE  
**CHURCH OF ENGLAND.**

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BY R. M. BEVERLEY, ESQ.

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DICITE, PONTIFICES, IN SACRIS QUID FACIT AURUM?  
PERSIUS.

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FOURTEENTH EDITION.

12

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A

## LETTER.

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MOST REVEREND SIR,

**I**F the many persons in your diocese who have the ability and the wish, had also the courage, to express their opinions openly on the present state of the Church of England, I never should have undertaken to lead the forlorn hope against the ecclesiastical batteries. The timidity of my friends compels me to become your Grace's correspondent, and to invade the slumbers of Bishopthorpe with sounds not usually addressed to archiepiscopal ears.

The high honour of an answer I neither desire nor expect; other hands, less dignified, will wield the pen in favour of the Church: and a swarm of reverend authors will soon display their interested zeal, by a deluge of indignant and roaring pamphlets. It is no slight matter to attack the Established Church: but my duty and my inclination lead me to the attempt, and, without the slightest care for the consequences, I begin the war which shall never end but with victory, or that final catastrophe which silences all writers. Deign then, Most Reverend Sir, "to listen to the bleatings of one of your little sheep,"\* and to receive, without disdain, this unworthy offering laid at your feet, which, though it be not as sumptuous oblation as a heavy fine, may be not altogether unacceptable with its "crackling salt."

I have already said that there are many others in your diocese who have the inclination, if they had the courage, to take up the pen against the abuses of the Church; and in this numerous class I do not reckon the brute herd of farmers, who, according to clerical notions, are meant by nature to pay tithes and rent, but a large and talented array of well-educated gentlemen, whose opinions are to the last degree inimical to the Establishment. It is not probable

\* A phrase in Martin Luther's letter to the Pope Leo X. :—' Quare paternas ac vere Christi vicarias aures huic oviculæ tuæ interim clementissime accomodare dignetur beatitudo tua, et balatum meum hunc officiosè intelligere.'

that your Grace should have heard their sentiments orally delivered, but I have frequently listened with pleasure to their increasing discontent, expressed now in terms which it is impossible to mistake. England is thoroughly sick of the Church Establishment, and your Grace's diocese perhaps reckons more persons who feel this nausea than any other in England. It is therefore surprising, that, from so large a mass of discontent, no one should have come forth to express the feelings of what, I am persuaded, is a large majority of the population. The great spell that keeps all men silent on this topic, is the fear of that dreadful weapon, *the accusation of atheism*—a weapon always liberally used by the Clergy when their strong holds are attacked. The popular indignation is so easily excited by this awful accusation, and the feeling of society in general is so decidedly against the crime included in the charge, that no one dares to enter a war where such a weapon is used.—Is this prudence, however, or is it cowardice? The man who is sincerely attached to the Christian religion, and who thinks that its nominal guardians are in reality its worst enemies, should encounter even worse slander than this, in doing a service to a cause which might have even less claim to sincerity than the cause of religion.

It is however remarkable, that all those who have undertaken to urge reforms in religion, have been charged with *atheism*—it was so with the early Christians; it was so with the Lollards and Lutherans; it is so now with those who urge the paramount necessity of depriving the Church of England of her temporal power and emoluments. But truth must triumph at last; and calumny, which is the buttress of a bad cause, cannot support corruption beyond a certain time; for, as the building is fixed on the sands, when the floods arise and beat upon that house, great will be the fall thereof.

On some weak minds perhaps, the unceasing assurances from the pulpit that the Church of England is synonymous with the Christian religion, may have made a little impression; and I know some few persons who agree with the majority of the Clergy in their definition of religion. Our reverend pastors present us a strange picture of Christianity in their sermons, their charges, and their tracts. According to their notions, the Apostles, or at least the immediate disciples of the Apostles, were reverend gentlemen, residing on wealthy livings, preaching fifty-two written, printed, or lithographed sermons in the course of the year, and securing livings for their clerical, or commissions in the Roman army for their military sons. In that golden age, according to their system, all the world was not only taxed by Cæsar, but tithed by Cæsar, for the benefit of the primitive Clergy; and the priests of the first three centuries amused themselves with card-playing, fox-hunting, horse-racing, shooting, fishing, and dancing, as they do at present. Pluralities were multiplied, and translations were frequent. St. Paul had a golden prebend of Philippi, a large living at Rome, another at

Thessalonica, and was besides 'the very reverend' the Dean of Corinth. St. Peter was translated from the bishoprick of Babylon to that of Rome; and St. James was enthroned\* at Jerusalem, with great pomp and large lawn sleeves, after having subscribed the thirty-nine articles, according to the Act of Parliament. St. Bartholomew was pressed to take the see of Jericho, but he preferred holding the deanery of Naphthali, with the great living of Succoth, which last was of the clear yearly value of £8,000., and besides was encumbered with very little duty, as there were only seven hundred persons in the parish, five hundred of whom did not believe in the Christian religion. St. Clement died worth twelve hundred thousand pounds in the three per cent. consols, the careful savings of forty years' episcopacy; and Irencæus, having been a tutor to a consul's son, had the primacy of Rome offered him, which however he refused, being content with the bishoprick of Lyons.

All this, or something like this, must certainly be true, according to the dreams of the parsons dreamed in their pulpits, when these reverend teachers undertake to prove the purity and excellence of the Church of England. They tell us that the Church of England, as it is now established, is the exact and true Church, without any alteration, being precisely such as it was founded by Christ and the Apostles; nay, to such an extravagant pitch is this carried by some of our ecclesiastics, that some one of the Bishops, in a charge delivered within the last few years, declared there was a sanctity in the minutest portion of the ecclesiastical dress, which it was by no means lawful to alter in any respect.—Unless, therefore, the Clergy are very dishonest, and do not believe what they say, they must be very ignorant, and must really imagine that the great mass of secular corruption, called the Church of England, is precisely the same as was established by the Apostles: they must suppose that in the first century there was a sacred regiment of Archbishops, Bishops, Prebendaries, Archdeacons, Deans, Precentors, Chancellors, Proctors, Rectors, Vicars, and Curates—they must suppose that there was a struggle for translations amongst the Bishops, as there is at present; that gentlemen of education, or noblemen's sons, were selected for the higher honours of the Church, whilst all the hard work was consigned to poor curates, the rectors themselves being far away from their livings, amusing themselves with the fox-chase, leading a fashionable life in the metropolis, dancing at some 'primitive' Almacks, or culling the sweets of pleasure at some 'primitive' Paris.

\* 'Enthroned,' and 'intronization,' are strange words for placing a Bishop in the chair of Christ; so preposterous however are we in our pomp and pride, that the newspapers assure us, at the last making of an Archbishop of Canterbury, it would have cost his Grace £30,000. if he had been enthroned with the full ritual in the chair of his own Cathedral! His Grace therefore very wisely avoided so heavy a mulct, by sending a deputy to act the farce of 'Nolo,' or by some other contrivance, which I do not exactly remember, escaped the fees, fines, and foppery of that most stupid and frivolous rite.

It is my duty, however, to dissipate this dream of a primitive Church: for, having turned my attention for some years to the subject, and having referred to the original sources of ecclesiastical history, I am enabled to state with confidence that no two systems could well be imagined more different, in every respect, than the primitive Church of Christ and the present Church of England. The two great points of difference are these—1. There was no Diocesan Bishops. 2. There was no tithe or church property. To these might be added a long list of other particulars, some of which I shall touch upon as the occasion offers.

Every one knows that the Bishops are mentioned in the New Testament; but the question is, what were these Bishops? They were the same as the Elders or the Presbyters; and the correct translation of the word *Episcopos*, which stands in the original for Bishop, is *Overseer*. A Bishop, with us, means a *Lord-parson*; in the New Testament, it means an Elder or Presbyter of the Church, of which there were many in one city, and they as little dreamed of taking precedence of the nobility, as they did of pocketing fines or taking tithe in kind.

A slight attention to the New Testament\* itself, will shew the absurdity of supposing the early Bishops to have borne any resemblance to our courtly Prelates. St Paul (Acts xx. 17.) sent from Miletus to Ephesus, and called the Elders of the Church, and he said to them (verse 28) ‘take heed therefore, to yourselves and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost, has made you *Bishops*, to feed the Church of God, &c. Our translation however has, with considerable dexterity, given the word *Overseer* in this passage instead of Bishop, and for this reason, because if the Elders of Miletus were Bishops, it would be clear that the Bishops of Scripture must have been very different from our Bishops; it would be much the same as if a letter were to be written in these days ‘to all the Bishops of Malton.’ In another passage, however, the translators have been obliged to translate the word *Episcopos* according to their general design; Philippians, chap. i. v. 1.—‘Paul and Timotheous, to all the Saints in Christ Jesus, which are at Philippi with the *Bishops and Deacons.*’ Here we find many Bishops in one town, there were probably not less than a score of them. What would your Grace say, if there were twenty Archbishops of York established at Bishophorpe? I suspect your Grace would have no objection to send nineteen of them to the saints at Philippi.

But again, that the Bishops were Elders and the Elders Bishops, is evident from St. Paul’s Epistle to Titus, (c. 1. v. 5.) ‘For this

\* See an excellent Sermon on this subject, entitled, ‘Diocesan Episcopacy Examined, a discourse delivered at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, by William Hendry Stowell. Newcastle, 1830.’

'cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain Elders in every city, if any be blameless, for a Bishop must be blameless, &c. Crete is a small island, and yet St. Paul ordered Titus to ordain Bishops in every city of this small island! What then were these Bishops? Simply Overseers or Governors of the Christian congregations. St. Peter (c. 1. v. 1.) says, 'the Elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also a *fellow-elder*, feed the flock of God which is among you, *exercising your bishopricks over them*, not by constraint, &c. This ought to have been the translation, but in our version we read 'taking the oversight thereof,' a very questionable expression, and certainly not faithful in any view of the subject; nevertheless, if it would have proved the Elders had been addressed as Bishops, that they were the same officers of the Church, and though their identity is abundantly manifest, yet it was not advisable to let this identity appear too often.

And now to the actions of the early Bishops. What ecclesiastical antiquarian will dare to tell us, that the Apostolical Elders or Bishops assumed the title of 'Lord,' were 'Barons' in Parliament, and were translated from one fat bishoprick to another, till their purses were well filled to their entire satisfaction? Let us observe what Christ himself said to the early 'Bishops'—'Do ye not after the works of the Pharisees, for they love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi: but be not ye called Rabbi, for one is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren; and call no man your father upon the earth, for one is your Father which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters, for one is your master, even Christ, but he that is greatest amongst you shall be your servant.'

Turning from the New Testament to Bishopthorpe, I find that your Grace, as a matter of course, always takes the first place at feasts, whatever feast may be honoured with your company, unless peradventure the Most Reverend Father in God my Lord Archbishop of Canterbury should be present, in which case your Grace must be content with the second place, even though there be Dukes present. I find also that on all occasions you are called Rabbi, Rabbi, and take the chief place in the synagogues, whether it be the synagogue of God in the Cathedral, or the synagogue of Lords. I find moreover that you are called 'Father' upon earth, in spite of the prior claim of the heavenly Father, and in spite of the strict commands of Christ to the contrary: and, as if that was not enough in order to make you a perfect divinity, I find you are called 'Most Reverend Father;' a title which can only be applied to the Almighty without profaneness, for the true meaning of the title is, 'a Father most to be worshipped.' Not content with heavenly attributes, there is an additional title in all men's mouths of 'your Grace,' a silly superscription, which it is difficult to explain, though



it is decorous to use it. Johnson's Dictionary gives us the following meanings of the word, 'favour—kindness—virtue—pardon—adventitious or artificial beauty—pleasing appearance—embellishment—ornament—flower—a short prayer said before and after meat.' Let us suppose then that I were to use any of these synonymes, and to call an Archbishop 'your embellishment'—or 'your ornament'—or 'your flowership'—or 'your artificial beauty'!

*Solventur risu tabulæ, tu missus abibis.*

See now the absurdity of all our ecclesiastical titles at the present day: an Archbishop is 'Most Reverend'—a Bishop is 'Right Reverend'—a Dean is 'Very Reverend'—an Archdeacon is 'Reverend and Venerable'—and a common Parson is 'Reverend'; and yet these persons presume to call themselves successors of the Apostles, and to declare that they have not in the slightest respect disobeyed the commands of Christ, or altered his institutions.

Having seen how the commands of Christ are set at nought by the Clergy in general, in the pomp of their titles, we should not leave the subject till we have duly considered the pride and vanity of the archiepiscopal dignities. The Archbishop of Canterbury is 'Primate and Metropolitan of all England!' He has the privilege to crown all the Kings of England, and to have Prelates for his officers, as for instance, the Bishop of London is his provincial Dean; the Bishop of Winchester is his Chancellor; the Bishop of Lincoln is his Vice-Chancellor; the Bishop of Salisbury his Precentor; the Bishop of Worcester his Chaplain. He may confer degrees of all kind, and censure and excommunicate, suspend, or depose for any just cause. He has power to grant dispensations in any case formerly granted by the see of Rome, not contrary to the law of God. He may retain eight chaplains, and during the vacancy of any see, he is the guardian of the spiritualities. The Archbishop of Canterbury is the first peer of the realm, and hath precedence, after the blood royal, before all the peers of the realm and the great officers of state. He has the privilege to crown the King. Next to him, in all things, is the Archbishop of York, who has precedence over all Dukes (not of the blood royal), and all great officers of state, except the Chancellor. He has the privilege to crown the Queen Consort. A Bishop hath a consistory court, to hear ecclesiastical causes. He consecrates churches, ordains, admits, and institutes priests, confirms, suspends, excommunicates, grants licences for marriages, and makes probates of wills. He has his Archdeacon, Dean and Chapter, Chancellor, and Vicar-General, to assist him: he may grant leases for three lives, or twenty-one years, of land usually letten, reserving the accustomed yearly rent, &c. &c.

Here surely is a list of dignities and emoluments to satisfy

even Satan himself! What more could be desired by the most ardent lover of the sinful lusts of the flesh? But who shall say that any one item of this long list of dignities and power has even the slightest connexion with the religion of Christ? We may call our Prelates 'Bishops,' and we may find the word 'Bishop' also in the New Testament, but excepting the position of the six letters requisite to form the word, there is no more resemblance between our modern Fathers in God and the ancient Overseers of the Church, than there is between a preacher of the Ranters and the Grand Lama of Thibet.

Your Grace is doubtless well read in the Fathers, and knows full well how fatal to the pretensions of the Clergy are many passages in those venerable writers; nevertheless, as all who see this Letter may not be equally well versed in ecclesiastical authors, I shall take the liberty to translate a striking passage of Augustin, on the subject of Bishops, 'The honour and the power is not to be sought for, because all things are vain under the sun, but the *work* itself, which arises from the honour and the power, if it is done rightly and usefully: that is, if it assists those who are put under them to find the salvation according to God; and on this account the Apostle says, 'he that desireth a bishoprick desireth a good *work*,' and by this he wishes to explain the word bishoprick or episcopacy, which is a title of WORK, not of honour. For the word episcopacy is Greek, and has its derivation from this, that he who is put over others, superintends those over whom he is placed, and takes care of them; for the word *epi* means *over*, and *scopos* means *watch*, therefore episcopos might be rendered by the word superintendant, overseer, guardian, to make us understand that he is not a Christian overseer who loves precedence, and does not wish 'to do good.' (De Civ. Dei. xix. 19.)

This certainly is a good definition of a Bishop; for it never can be too much impressed on the memories of our Prelates, that their duty is WORK; and if they would indeed be the successors and representatives of the Apostles and their 'Bishops,' they must, like those Bishops, *work*, and bear the cross of Christ, though it galls their shoulders to the bone. It is a high title to be a successor and lieutenant of an Apostle; but the acids as well as the sweets of this title must be taken by those who bear it. A 'Bishop' of the apostolical days was some person of the lower orders, a man of mean birth, but of fair character and upright conduct: he was selected to his office for his piety, constancy, and courage—in short, he was a man whom the early Christians could trust; and whether he was a fisherman, a money-changer, a tent-maker, a day-labourer, a common soldier, or a slave, (for all these were 'Bishops,') he was expected to give up every thing in this world, to renounce his family, to travel whithersoever the elders of the Church ordered

him, to encounter all the danger and difficulties attending the character of one who was a chief of a forbidden religion; and, in fine, to die for the faith if circumstances called him to martyrdom. The Bishop, being thus selected, began his mission with fear and trembling: he commenced his visitations to the various congregations of Christians by stealth, for fear of being arrested by the police; he travelled on foot without money, he had neither scrip nor purse, nor house, nor home. God was his friend, and all good men his family. Beyond this he had nothing. In the darkness of night he visited the congregations, and there exhorted his flock to continue in the fear and worship of God, not dreading the face of man. His time was taken up in clandestine preaching, in comforting the sick and afflicted, consoling the weak-hearted, praying with the sinners, and teaching the ignorant. Presently the governors of the place ordered him to be arrested with the other Bishops; he was thrown into prison, roughly treated, ill fed, exposed to cold and hunger, and after a long and rigorous duration, publicly beat in the market-place, by the rods of the lictors. After this he was perhaps banished from the city, and forbidden ever to return again on pain of death. In another city he was again taken up, and after several severe punishments by beating with rods, he was condemned to be thrown to the lions: but perhaps he escaped from prison by the assistance of his friends, and after terrible perils, by land and water, succeeded at length in eluding research in the depths of Syria, or the burning wildernesses of Ethiopia. But even there, after a time, the malice of persecutors hunted him out, and sent him, with other Christians, to be judged and punished at Rome. At Rome, after another long and painful imprisonment, he is again condemned to be thrown to the wild beasts, and at last his mortal sufferings are ended in the jaws of lions or under the feet of elephants, amid the applauding shouts of twenty thousand spectators. This is a faithful picture of an apostolical bishoprick, and hence we see the full force of the words of St. Paul: 'Are they ministers of Christ? I am more; in labours more abundant, in stripes above measure: in prisons more frequent, in deaths oft; of the Jews five times received I forty stripes save one; thrice was I beaten with rods; once was I stoned; thrice I suffered shipwreck; a night and a day have I been in the deep. In journeyings often, in perils of waters, in perils of robbers, in perils by mine own countrymen, in perils by the heathen, in perils in the city, in perils in the wilderness, in perils in the sea, in perils among false brethren. In weariness and painfulness, in watchings often, in hunger and thirst, in fastings often, in cold and nakedness.'

But what are the labours, watchings, fastings, perils, and difficulties of our Baron-Bishops? These holy men perhaps pass many a sleepless night in the first stage of their exaltation, to discover by what possible means they may escape the persecution of Llandaff

or Bristol, or some other poor see with which they find themselves disagreeably saddled. To be rid of this meagre martyrdom, they have sundry struggles with Satan, many a wrestling in prayer, many a score of groans and tears. By dint of voting and jobbing in the House of Lords, the successor of the Apostles finds his prospects brighten a little; for, after infinite exertions of soul and body, he is translated to Exeter, peradventure whereby his apostolical pocket is replenished with a greater number of orthodox guineas. But not in Exeter is the godly man at ease: he is smit with a love of multiplication, and letter after letter is written to his patron and the minister, urging the necessity of a more advantageous translation. In the course of time Winchester or Durham is vacant—then do all the eagles gather together to the carcase: loud are the screams of the apostolical vultures, and sad the dismay of the first Lord of the Treasury, to know how to satisfy so much pious voracity: at last, after undergoing the threats of a dozen great Lords, each eager for his own client, the Premier makes selection of the hero of this picture, and crowns his hopes with twenty-five thousand pounds a year, and all the gorgeous dignities of the Durham episcopacy. After this surely the man of God is contented at last? By no means: he has sons and daughters not a few, and nephews very numerous. For all these there must be accumulated a store of good things full of marrow: the eldest son perhaps will condescend to gather up the dainties of the state as a layman—he is to be the head of the family; for him therefore the Parliament, and the regular course of parliamentary jobbing, is open; but for his younger brothers the Church must open her nurse-like arms, and pour upon them a shower of benefices. My Lord Bishop is not slow to act the character of Jupiter Pluvius, and speedily sends forth from his liberal urn a deluge of golden prebends, large livings, archdeaconries, residentiaries, precentorships, chanceries, sub-deaneries, perpetual curacies, fellowships, masterships, vicarages, and all the other thousand varieties of dew concocted by the bounty of cloud-compelling Jove. The young gentlemen, who find themselves thus gilded from above, are probably the very worst sons of Belial that ever fornicated in the porch of the temple. I do not say this of the real Durham, for, luckily for me, the present Bishop has no children; neither do I say it of York; but I do mean it for some Bishop that either is or was on the bench, *and I know it as a positive fact*, that so gross and scandalous was the conduct of one of the sons of this Prelate, that even *he* revolted at the idea of going into the Church, and long resisted the importunities, and at last the commands of his Right Reverend Father, on this very infamous plan of aggrandizement. Threats, however, were at last employed, and the profligate was compelled to yield, though he did yield at last with a deep sense of shame and disgust. Circumstances have made me intimately acquainted with this transaction; but when it took place, or where, whether in the north or in the south, whether last

year, or twelve years ago, I pray your Grace never to ask of me. I know it, and can vouch for it, and let that be sufficient.

But who is there, however impudent his countenance, however triple his brass, who dare deny that the enormities of this sort are not of frequent occurrence? I would appeal to facts: I would take the whole Bench of Bishops for the last thirty years. I would have persons versed in the history of the time, men who are acquainted with the secrets of Government intrigue, and who are conversant with the leading characters of this period; and I would require of them to lay before the public a clear unexaggerated statement of the real history of the translations of these Bishops—they should explain at large the secret understandings, the innumerable jobs, the mean plots, the wretched objects, both of the promoters and the promoted. To this history should be appended a list of all the ecclesiastical and civil emoluments given to sons and nephews of Bishops, and the reason of these gifts, and it is not very romantic to assert, that such a history would offer as stinking a holocaust of corruption as ever yet was offered on the altars of Mammon.\*

And perhaps some one will here say, does this apply to the Metropolitan of England? On this subject I must plead ignorance: I know nothing ill, and therefore am bound to suppose all that is good relating to the ecclesiastical progress of your Grace; neither do I much complain of the aggrandizement of the Metropolitan family, they certainly have received some gentle irrigations of paternal bounty, but their characters, I am told, deserve it; and *ceteris paribus*, it is not very monstrous for a father to reward his sons, if the reward is not excessive, and if they who receive the reward are at least on a moral and intellectual par with the majority of those who are capable of receiving such rewards. In short, there is a general respect voluntarily paid to your Grace's private character, and a general opinion prevails that you have honourably ruled your diocese; from that respect, and that good opinion, I do not wish to detract the smallest particle; but, on the contrary, am glad to record whatever may be said without adulation on this subject, though I fear it is the general fate of Bishops, to hear the extremes of flattery and of hatred. Between these extremes I wish to steer my perilous bark, and though I am most anxious to tell the truth, and the whole truth, on a subject where others wish to be silent, yet it is far from my intention to utter a syllable of personal animadversion, merely to give force to an argument which stands in need of no such auxiliary.

\* 'This censure is not to be interpreted as applying to the promotion or translation of every Bishop: some few have been seated on the bench for better reasons. We are not without a few truly pious and laborious Prelates at this present moment.'

With this short explanation, allow me to remind your Grace, that the clamour against the private jobbing in Bishops' families, is nothing new in Church history: there was a grievous out-cry against it in the fifth and sixth centuries; and there is an express law on the subject in Justinian's Code, which might be passed now as an Act of Parliament, in these days, with very slight alterations.

‘———— it is therefore proper that those Priests should be chosen and ordained Bishops *who have neither children nor nephews*, for it is almost impossible that those who give themselves up to the cares of life which arise between children and parent, and which are of the very greatest importance, should spend all their thoughts and all their zeal on the service of God. For since some pious persons, with the greatest hope in God, from an ardent desire of saving their souls, hasten to the Churches and bequeath to them all their worldly goods, to the use of the poor and indigent, and for other pious purposes, it is highly improper that the Bishops should profit by them, or spend them on their own children and relations: *for a Bishop should be entirely free from all affections for children according to the flesh, that he may be the spiritual father of all the faithful.* On these accounts, therefore, we strictly forbid that any one *having sons or nephews* should be ordained Bishops. Concerning those Bishops, however, who now are, or who shall be hereafter, we command that they should on no account have the power of leaving by will, or giving away (or by any other means that can be thought of) any thing of their own property that they may have come in possession of, or acquired, *after they became Bishops*, either by will, or donation, or any other manner, excepting only those things which they had before they were Bishops.’ (Codicis. i. tit. 3. 42.)

What would be said in these days, by our Prelates, if, in imitation of the civil law, a bill was brought into Parliament, compelling all Bishops, at their ordination, to give a faithful account of their real and personal property, to enter this account in the register-office, and thus take away from them the power of leaving by will any real or personal property, more than they possessed at the day of their consecration? Such a law would be most just and useful, and if such a law existed, how could Bishop Tomline have disposed of his seven hundred thousand pounds, which report says he bequeathed to his family, already well enriched with episcopal munificence?

The newspapers for the year 1826 furnish us with a case in point. It relates to a Dr. Warburton, Bishop of Cloyne, a person for whom the law in Justinian's Code would have been of the greatest use. (See Morning Herald, August 12, 1826.) Dr. Warburton was for several years patron of Limerick, and much esteemed for his courteous manners. His family held the first rank in society, and professed to be much attached to that city and its inhabitants, The translation to Cloyne, though at an increase of £3,000. a

‘year to the Bishop, and many thousands of enlarged patronage, was much regretted by them. (Query, whom?) The Bishop had other views. His mind, like that of all men who have advanced their fortune from humble life, was bent on the acquirement of riches and a name. The retired situation of Cloyne gave him opportunities of so doing, which the gaiety and comparatively expensive society of Limerick did not permit. From the hour of his arrival here he continued to amass wealth, and the result has been, that he has left £120,000. among his children!—three sons and one daughter, one of whom is a colonel in the army, another a major, another in the Church, and the daughter married to Archdeacon Mansell, in Limerick. The Bishop was buried this morning, I stood on his grave-stone some hours after, and heard from the people their opinion of his character. They told me that he was an excellent private individual, exemplary in his domestic duties as a husband and a father, and *strict in the observance of religious forms*; but that he was neither respected nor esteemed in this neighbourhood. He drained the diocese of an immense annual sum, but he returned no part of it in works of charity. He abstracted himself from all society, and held his station more as a petty despot, exacting his subsidy from the toil of the people, than as a Christian pastor, in daily communicating with his flock, to whose care a great revenue was entrusted, as the steward for the children of want and misfortune. His palace was more like a rack-rent farmer’s house than a gentleman’s mansion. The coldness and apathy of the people at his funeral, is the best comment of his inutile life.’

‘The Bishop’s real name was Mungan. He was the son of a poor road-way piper, in a little village in the north of Ireland. He was a Roman Catholic, and intended for that Church. On the Continent, where he was sent to study at one of the Catholic Colleges, before the building of Maynooth, he was thrown, by accident, into the society of the Earl of Moira, and having won his favour, was induced to change his destination from the Roman to the Protestant Church. He was, after taking orders, appointed as Chaplain to a regiment in America, and there he married his first wife, a lady said to have been particularly recommended by Lord Moira. That lady soon after dying, he married his second wife, now his widow. With her he changed his name to Warburton. He became Dean of Ardah; then Bishop of Limerick, and the piper’s son died Bishop of Cloyne, with £7,000. a year, and £120,000. in ready money.’

But this case is so common that I will boldly assert, without fear of contradiction, even from any Priest, if he be an honest man, that the majority of the Bishops of the Church of England *always* are persons whose main object is to amass wealth and to aggrandize their families. This is a notorious fact, and indeed nothing but a

constant standing miracle could prevent it from being so; for, when every temptation is held out to our Prelates to indulge any of their evil propensities, not only with impunity but applause, and when they find a caste of servile people in the land who admire the Prelates, whether they are avaricious, luxurious, indolent, haughty, ignorant, rich, or useless; when the largest fortunes and most splendid dignities are liberally thrust into their bosoms, how could it be otherwise, as long as human nature is as it is, than that our Bishops should be generally corrupt and fall short of the Christian rule?

It requires no prophet to predict the state of the prelacy under such a system as ours, and yet a Prophet has predicted what sort of Bishops we, and all other nations cursed with a State-Church, must endure. 'Take heed,' says St. Paul to the Elders or Bishops of Miletus, 'unto yourselves and all the flock over which the Holy Ghost has made you Overseers to feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood; for I know this, that after my departure shall GRIEVOUS WOLVES enter in among you, *not sparing the flock*; also of your own selves shall men arise speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples from them: therefore WATCH, and remember, that by the space of three years, I ceased not to warn every one night and day with tears. I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel; yea ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered to my necessities, and to them that were with me; I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring, ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, IT IS MORE BLESSED TO GIVE THAN TO RECEIVE.'

I therefore consider myself as obeying the command of St. Paul, when I write this Letter to your Grace, because, in so doing, 'I watch,' and set up a cry of alarm against these 'grievous wolves' who have entered into Christ's sheepfold, and have turned the house of prayer into a den of thieves. I am thoroughly impressed with the truth as paramount to all other truths, excepting the high mysteries of our religion, that the Church of England, as it is now constituted, is a machine of Anti-Christ, greatly surpassing in the grossness of its abuses, all other jobs or systems of corruption that ever have afflicted the kingdom: and so much mischief has it done to religion, besides all the political enormities with which it may be charged, that all pious persons should hail with shouts of joy, that high and holy day now not far distant, when the Church of England will be abolished by Act of Parliament, deprived entirely of all its revenues, and put on an equality with the other Christian sects tolerated in this country. This is speaking the truth without circumlocution; but it is a truth acknowledged more and more every day, and the more the Clergy in this diocese are accustomed to hear this truth, the less will the evil day surprise them when it comes upon them with thunder and an earthquake. I have said much of the injuries that religion suffers by the Church of England, and this is



the most important view of the subject, (though there are others also well worth attention,) for when the people see the teachers of righteousness, and 'the successors of the Apostles' practically confuting all the doctrines of the Gospel, they naturally think that the scheme of Christianity is a formal ceremony of the State, invented for the decorum and civilities of the body politic. The machinery of a Church united to the State, must of necessity tend to solemn deceptions, and in all other religions but that of pure Christianity, solemn deceptions are the principal object. But whether they be the *object* of those who rule *our* Church, I cannot say; but that they abound in great profusion, no one not interested in the question will dare to deny. Some one has said that solemnity and humbug are 'Twin-Brothers,' which, though it be a homely saying, contains much truth, and is well worthy your Grace's attention; for, an attentive observer cannot fail to remark, that the more religious solemnities are multiplied, the further does religion remove her tabernacle from such scenes, till at last she leaves this earth altogether, and like Astræ, takes up her abode in heaven. Whether, as far as we are concerned, she is at this moment in the third heaven, or only in the sphere of the moon, let those who know the secrets of heaven and earth decide; but this is certain, that no proclamation, with an immense reward appended, could find her either at Lambeth or at Bishopthorpe.\*

There were two ways offered to our Bishops at the Reformation—poverty and the way of Christ, or riches and the support of the State. They were in great haste to choose the latter, and for two centuries having strained every nerve to acquire worldly wealth, pomp, precedence and dignities, have succeeded to the utmost of their wishes, whilst all their spiritual dominion, all their power over the minds of the people, all the gospel-rule over the hearts of the Christians, is gone from them for ever. They have found the broad way that leads to destruction; they have gone through the gates of Lord Mammon's lodge, with the drums and trumpets of worldly pride; they have marched magnificently on with all the glittering apparatus of gold and power; they have been attended by a body-guard of lawyers, judges, constables and jailors; they have been escorted by Kings and Queens; they have been surrounded with all the 'solemnities' of antiquity and dominion—and, with all the noise and ceremony of their splendid cavalcade, *have come to the end of their march at last*, to reap the reward of the choice they made. But where have been Christ's chosen ones all this time? Where have been the humble Christians, who, 'through much

\* In naming Bishopthorpe, I do not wish the word to be understood, either in this passage or any other, with a *particular* meaning. The Bishopthorpe here mentioned is the Bishopthorpe of all Archbishops of York, whether they be in ancient or modern times; only I would not have this antiquity carried beyond the reign of Edward VI. Before the Reformation our Prelates were very different persons, they had their faults, but those faults were of a different nature from those which now call for the animadversion of Protestants.

'tribulation enter into the kingdom of heaven?—they, with noiseless footsteps, have kept the even tenour of their way, far remote from the tumultuous equipage of Church and State; they, through evil report and good report, through the persecution, perhaps, of their families, through the jeers and gibes of the fashionable world, through the scorn and contumely of insolent wealth, have sought the pearl of great price which never is set in the gold of the world, and they also have their reward.

With the Church of England and with true piety there is but a slight connexion. Some pious persons there are, undoubtedly, in the Church; but the great mass of religion is to be found with the Dissenters, or with those whom the Rulers of the Church are pleased to nick-name Methodists, though they never went near a methodist chapel in their lives. The favoured sons of the Church, whom she delighteth to honour, are men in dignities and honours, men violent in their politics, jobbers in every department of the State, and all persons who are decorous Church-goers, however scandalous their lives, or however base their principles. Decorum and outward shew are essentials in all things relating to the Church of England; and two-thirds of the Clergy, as well as two-thirds of their flocks, seem to think that religion is a theatrical ceremony that can by no means be omitted, but which, when once performed, is an indulgence general for any thing else that the heart may desire. Hence the nervous anxiety exhibited by the Clergy to see all the nobility and gentry in their Churches,—hence the unceasing sermons on the virtue of going to Church.—Hence the steady Church-going of mayors and aldermen, hence their decorous taking of the Sacrament.—Hence the solemnity of chaplains and religious services in the Court, and in the houses of the nobility. 'If you go to Church you will go to Heaven,' is not said in the pulpit in so many words, but is very broadly hinted in many a sermon and many a tract; and the complacency with which all steady Church-goers view their own conduct, is a proof how they have interpreted the spurious divinity of their pastors. According to common opinion Church-going and religion are synonymous, so that he who is religious must be a Church-goer, and he who frequently goes to Church must be religious. It is an ancient heresy as old as the time of the Jewish Prophets, who have loudly complained of it in vehement and indignant language—'To what purpose is the calling of your assemblies,' exclaims Isaiah to the orthodox Church-going Jews, 'I cannot away with them, it is iniquity even your solemn meetings—when you spread forth your hands I will hide mine eyes from you, yea when ye make many prayers I will not hear.'—These words are often read in the lessons, but they make no impression on the hearers; when the ball of reproof is flying about, every man carries his own racket with him and strikes off the ball to his neighbour: so that this text, and fifty other texts like it, are supposed to apply to the Jews—to the Gentiles—to the any-bodies rather than to *our* Church, *our* cor-

ruptions, and *our corrupt selves!* My Lord A., or Mr. whoremonger B., or jobbing placeman C. think the passage very fine and poetical, and perfectly proper for those rascals the Jews; but to themselves it has no application whatever, for they continue to attend the solemn meetings with most decorous regularity, they spread forth their hands to the cathedral litanies and anthems with most picturesque effect, they make many prayers twice every Sunday, they take the Sacrament occasionally to keep up appearances, but they will not give up one tittle of their evil practices, in whatever department of immorality they are most conspicuous. All this is well known to the Clergy, but no reproof is ever heard, even in a whisper, against such villainous hypocrisy; for as long as their flock answer to the muster-rolls of deception *in* the Church, what matters it to them what they do *out* of the Church? In the whole course of my life, I never heard of a Clergyman refusing the Sacrament to an immoral Christian, and if your Grace can point out to me any one of the Clergy in your diocese who ever ventured the experiment of this obsolete honesty, I should like to see the black swan, and to praise him as he well deserves to be praised. But how often have I seen immoral, scandalously immoral Christians, pressing to the Sacrament! and of their immorality there could be no question, it was open, flagrant, violent, and unconcealed—neither could it be suggested that they had repented, for their vice was of long continuance, and though it had been of many years' standing, yet they hesitated not to eat and drink their own damnation repeatedly; neither did the Clergy hesitate to administer the Sacrament, though he knew all the circumstances of the case as well as any of the congregation. And this, I say, is so common a case, that there is no large town in England where you could not find an example of it every time that the Sacrament is administered; and I moreover assert, that your Grace knows this fact perfectly well, as well as all the other Right Reverends on the Bench.

We need not, however, wonder at the substitution of decorum for religion in our Church, for in these days an outward form of worship is indispensable for those who do not find it convenient to be inwardly pious. Now as the Church considers every one her dutiful son who pays tithes, and does not go to the Dissenting Chapel, it follows of necessity that she must have a very large majority of evil persons in her armies; and she must also have a code of religion to suit this immense majority. Every body can attend the forms of public worship, but not one in a hundred *chooses* to be a good Christian: hence the difference between good Church-goer and good Christian, a difference which the Clergy are particularly anxious to keep out of view, for if it were once admitted how many persons would belong to the Church? Under the present system, however, where outward form and religion are synonymous, she musters a mighty host; for every one, who is not a Dissenter, belongs to the Church.—Go into the streets, Most Reverend Sir, stop any

one reeling from the ale-house, or any one walking into the stews, and ask them to what sect of Christians they belong, and they will instantly reply 'to the Church of England.' All the rogues and villains in the kingdom belong to the Church of England; every profligate scoundrel amongst the nobility, (and the Lord knows how numerous they are!) belongs to the Church of England; every young gentleman 'about town', belongs to the Church of England; nine-tenths of the members of the clubs, belong to the Church of England; every man in place, every jobber in every department, every screwing attorney, every pimp, adulterer, fornicator, political traitor, turn-coat, swindler, and gambler, belongs to the Church of England—they have all been baptized in the laver of regeneration, they are all good sons of the Church, not one of them has ever entered a Dissenting Chapel; and, when they die, the Clergyman will tell us, in a solemn voice, that 'Almighty God, of his great mercy, hath taken unto himself the soul of our dear brother here departed!' So that England is literally teeming with future Angels in such redundancy, that you cannot go any where without meeting them. Thus hath the gold become dross, and thus has the religion itself become as unlike the religion of Christ, as our spiritual Barons are unlike the primitive Elders of the Church.

I have already hinted at the solemn mockeries of the Established Church, but a few words more are requisite to shew how the business of the State-religion is considered a mere theatrical ceremony. Amongst the numerous instances of religious impostures, (and all these impostures emanate from the connexion of the Church with the State,) may be noticed, the Proclamation against Vice and Immorality, directed to be read in Churches every year, and always read at the opening of assizes and sessions. This putid decree of dishonesty represents the King as vehemently animated with a godly zeal against the immorality of his subjects, and determined to wage war against all appearances of it with as much holy wrath as Josiah exhibited against the abominations of the heathens. Strict injunctions are given to all magistrates, in this precious document, to exert themselves vigorously; and its whole tenour would lead one to suppose that the golden age of piety was returned, fatal to all sorts of luxury, riot, revellings, profaneness, extravagance, fornication, tippling, and gluttony. To keep up the farce, the Archdeacons, in their printed questions, annually demand of the Clergy if they have read the Proclamation against Vice and Immorality in the Churches according to order. What answers the reverend gentlemen give to the Archdeacon does not appear. But when we consider the luxurious extravagance of the late Court, the enormous wealth of the Clergy, and the daily increasing profligacy of the nobility and higher orders of society in this country, we may easily perceive the religious joke that is played on the people by this and all other attempts at establishing a faith by law, instead of a faith according to the Gospel.

But we are told that Christianity is part and parcel of the law of the land, and those who gainsay its abstract doctrines are punished with fine and imprisonment. Even Mr. Attorney-General, Lawyer Scarlett, in prosecuting a miserable and mistaken deist, sung the same strain, and ran through all the octave of cozenage usual in these disgusting persecutions. Would to God that Christianity were part and parcel of the law of the land in reality, I should wish for nothing better; and I know full well, if that were the case, what would become of some Right Reverend Prelates, and the whole gang of pluralists who have violated, and are violating this law every day. I should then apply for a warrant against some gold-getting Bishop, and holding him safe in custody, where he must remain without bail or mainprize till the next assizes or general gaol delivery, the grand jury would find the following bill against him:—

‘The jurors of our sovereign lord the King, on their oath, present that William, by divine grace Bishop of Durham,\* not having the fear of God before his eyes, but being moved and seduced by the instigation of the devil, did, on the — day of —, in the — year of the reign of our said sovereign lord the King, with force and arms by means of an attorney, of the value of five shillings, place or cause to be placed in the three per centum consols, the sum of five hundred thousand pounds sterling, which sum of money he, the said William, Bishop, had traiterosly, feloniously, and devilishly collected, scraped together, and hoarded, from the perquisites of his bishoprick, and other his manifold livings, prebendaries, and spiritual enoluments, contrary to the form and order of divers statutes of the Gospel according to St. Matthew, and of the other Gospels in such case made and provided; but more especially in violation of that statute of St. Matthew, which saith, ‘Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses.’ (chap. x. v. 10.) And of that other statute which saith ‘lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.’ (chap. vi. 19.) And also in violation of all the other laws of the New Testament relating to the Rulers, Elders, and Bishops of the Church, who are forbidden to ‘give themselves up to the filthy lucre.’ And so the jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do say that the said William, by divine grace Bishop aforesaid, did, on the day and in the manner aforesaid, violate the laws of the Gospel, against the peace of our said lord the King his crown and dignity.’

This would be putting the doctrine of a State-religion to the test; it would be proving that Christianity is in reality ‘part and parcel of the law of the land,’ as the judges do most mendaciously teach from their chairs; but at present it is only part and parcel of the law where it suits the rulers of the great machine to say so; in all

\* An imaginary Bishop.

cases where the New Testament bears against the wealth and immunities of the Clergy, and the wickedness of a State-religion, it is as mute and obsolete as the Acts of Parliament passed before the flood. If any one should doubt this fact, let him attentively read the sermon on the Mount, and then ask himself how much of that sermon is to be found in the law of the land, or rather let him say how much of that sermon is not virtually abolished by the laws.

The political religion of the Country has, however, so debased the understanding, that a large majority of Church-goers really look up to the King and the Parliament\* as the nurses and true directors of their faith. If immorality is making rapid strides in the land, (and that too in spite of the King's Proclamation,) instead of tracing this immorality to the luxurious and fashionable lives of the Clergy, their apathy and carelessness in their duties, their multiplied pluralities, their diligent search after pleasure, their evil examples, and their ignorance of all true piety, † they imagine that a grant of money from Parliament for the purpose of building new Churches will remedy the evil at once, and heal the sores of vice and profligacy. Parliament, never slow to squander money, and more especially when the Church is concerned, pours forth her millions for the 'pious' task; and by that means ten-fold increases the mischief. The Churches are already far too numerous, as their congregations shew wherever we turn our eyes; but besides the manifest inutility and absurdity of the plan, the mischief is greatly increased by building new Churches, owing to the long train of 'jobbing' which every Church-building gives rise to. In every way jobbing flourishes at the building of a Parliament Church. The old Parson is jealous, or is avaricious and greedy of his fees and patronage, and manfully jobs against the building; the building-party job against him, and at last are victorious. Then there is jobbing for a favorite architect, who makes a sad job of the new Church, by jobbing with the parishioners to swindle them out of their money, for repairs, iron-railings, decorations, altar-covers, and other trumpery. Again, they job for the new Parson; and here again the old Parson jobs against

\* Decree of the Convocation in the first year of Queen Elizabeth. 'Nothing shall henceforward be accounted heresy but what is so adjudged by the Holy Scripture, or in any one of the first four general Councils, determining according to the word of God, or finally, *which shall be so adjudged in the time to come by the Court of Parliament.*'

† In every part of this Letter, I wish to make honourable exception in favour of the Evangelical Clergy, who, compared with the worldly hirelings, are perhaps one in twenty. I know no praise too great for some Clergymen whom I could name, and who, according to my notions of what become Christian Ministers, have shewn themselves to be worthy messengers indeed of the doctrine of the Cross. To such Pastors it would be no extravagant compliment to say, that they have obeyed this scripture command to the full—'Preach the word—be instant in season and out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine—watch in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an Evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry. 2 Timothy, iv.'

them; till at last, by dint of every sort of trickery, the matter is settled—a bad, ugly, pseudo gothic lump of plastered brick is erected, and some favorite dandy Priest duly put in possession of the pulpit, from whose new red velvet cushion he reads purchased sermons to yawning congregations.

I am, however, much rejoiced to see that this system of swindling has been manfully resisted in the West-Riding; and that all the aggressions of the priestly party on the pockets of the parishioners, have been foiled by the exertions of some honourable individuals, who deserve for it the thanks of their country, and whose example will, I trust, be followed in other places, when similar attempts are made to extort money from the people on the pretence of religion.

And what is there in the Clergy, to make it so very desirable that in addition to the grievous mulct and punishment of tithe, we should also incur the parishes with new Churches? Are not the actions of the Clergy in the old Churches sufficient warning? Are five millions in hard cash, paid every year to the ‘successors of the Apostles,’ not sufficient; and ought not the vast number of large empty temples in all parts of the kingdom first to be filled, with even such Christians as our political religion loves, before we build new Churches to dedicate them to emptiness? If nature abhors a vacuum, according to the saying of the old philosophers, much more do Churches abhor a vacuum; and till we can a little diminish that vacuum, it is a vain and senseless squandering of the public money to lavish it on stones and bricks, under the pretence of increasing faith. But in fact we are now pestered with a rage for ornamenting Churches: that old heresy of refurbishing and gilding temples to please the Almighty, has revived with wonderful strength within late years, and Archbishop Laud might rejoice if he could behold our zeal in this spurious heathen piety. As long as this fancy is confined to the Cathedrals, and as long as it is indulged for its only honest purpose, namely, a national pride in keeping perfect those beautiful and stately edifices, no one could find fault with it, *provided always* that every sixpence of these repairs came out of the pocket of the Deans and Chapters attached to the Cathedrals; but when this architectural mania descends to simple Parish Churches, burthening the parish with heavy charges, and more particularly for new Churches not wanted, then the ‘antiquarian taste,’ as it is called, is a complete nuisance, and is one of the many just causes of hatred of the Clergy now openly professed in many places by the people. If the old Churches are to be repaired, or new ones built, then ought the Clergy to defray every farthing of the cost; they have ample means for such undertakings; but by burthening the people with the expense, they compel us to remember the Roman Catholic Clergy with admiration and even with regret.

So much am I persuaded of the justice of this proposition, that

I have always thought the Clergy in your Grace's diocese ought to be compelled to restore York Cathedral at their own cost; neither do I say this without a precedent, for when St. Paul's Cathedral had been much damaged by fire, in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, it was restored by a compulsory subscription of the Clergy;\* for in those days, when there was a general feeling against Church property, and a lively remembrance of Roman Catholic munificence, it would have been a stroke of impolicy not even attempted by the avarice of Protestant Clergymen, to call upon the Laity to rebuild the Churches of the Priests. In these days, however, we are more easily cajoled, and the Clergy know full well with whom they have to deal. Nevertheless, as the liberal subscriptions of the Laity for the restoration of York Cathedral has been entirely voluntary, they have no cause to complain; for if they choose to discharge the debts of the Priests nobody has a right to prohibit their indulging a taste which though it be eccentric is certainly innocuous.

But even in this ridiculous transaction, we trace the usual policy of the Clergy. I admire their cunning, but nothing else do I admire in the management of a question which always has appeared to me in the last degree trifling and ridiculous,—for if the Clergy wished to spoil the Cathedral, and deceive the subscribers, I would willingly allow them to do so. They have, unquestionably, *the power*; and by persisting in their foolish plan of removing the choir-screen eastward, against all good faith and good taste, they have greatly increased the popular aversion against themselves, which in these days needs no increase. To those, however, who look upon the ornamenting of Churches as pleasing to God, I recommend the following passage from the work† of an Architect, as it expresses, in plain terms, the fashionable piety of the day:—

‘ Previous to the Reformation every attention was paid to our sacred edifices, and *wealth was lavished* in creating effects which certainly inspired religious awe. The very reverse of this feeling is now *unfortunately* observable in our country Churches; and it is not surprising that the rustic enters the place of worship with little ceremony, when neglect is evident throughout, when its *sacred walls* are covered with dust, damp, and cobwebs: the very altar more desolate than the rest! At a time when the seceders from our national religion are daily increasing, it is surely not impolitic to consider the causes which occasion the defection, and amongst many others the want of attention to the building dedicated to the service of the Deity *may be considered most important*. Were the comforts of the poor attended to, by affording them proper accom-

\* For an interesting account of this transaction, see ‘Strype’s life of Archbishop Grindall: folio, p. 56.’

† An attempt to ascertain the age of the Church of Mickleham, in Surrey, by P. F. Robinson, Architect. 1825.’



‘moderation in the Parish Church, numbers would be withheld from joining the Dissenters, and from becoming *hostile to our venerable Establishment*.

Thus we see religion reduced to a certainty by brick and mortar, well hewn stones, and carved oak. The beau-ideal of Christianity, in these days, is easily described. A young Clergyman, very good looking, with a fine voice—a very rich living, with little occasional duty, (which little duty is performed by a curate)—a handsome Church, newly gilded and decorated—very warm stoves, and comfortable pews—shining communion plate—red morocco prayer books, carried by footmen—a dry road to the Church door—sermons which never require more than twenty minutes in the preaching—Sacrament at Easter—and a perfect ignorance of all Dissenters’ Chapels. This is a true primitive parish, according to the fashionable notions of the day; this is pure religion; this is ‘our venerable Establishment;’ this is ‘Mother Church’ in her bridal attire. All that is more than this is fanaticism; ‘without, are dogs and sorcerers,’ but within the pale, there is heaven upon earth. As I have however a few words more to say of these young gentlemen who constitute the apostolical body in England, I pray your Grace’s attention to some short remarks on the *Angels* annually let loose from the bottomless pit of Oxford and Cambridge.

Amongst persons who are totally ignorant of the religion of Christ, it is a very common remark, that ‘the young gentlemen of education and family’ have greatly improved the Church of England of late years. In confirmation of this blunder, an appeal is made to the experience of our fathers, who remember, thirty or forty years ago, a very different scene of riotous drunkenness amongst the Clergy of their day. We readily acknowledge that the beastly intoxication of those times is greatly diminished; but if the cause of this diminution is traced to any thing but a change in the manners of society, it will be a great mistake. Let us not, however, be too hasty even on this topic, for it cannot be unknown to any one acquainted with Cambridge at least, (of Oxford I am ignorant) that the young Clergy of the *orthodox* party are famed there for any thing but sobriety and chastity. On this subject I could give your Grace much information, having been an eye-witness to many a scene of clerical revelling in that seat of sound religious instruction; but I wish not to offend your ears with disreputable anecdotes, and therefore shall be content with having given an index to a scandalous chronicle, which may be further investigated if it shall appear of sufficient importance.

In the country, or at least the counties somewhat distant from the two Universities, we concede that the Clergy are more respectable in their exterior deportment; but this concession does not extend farther than to an absence from gross immorality; in

every respect short of manifest vice, their lives are any thing but what is befitting the preachers of righteousness and the 'successors of the Apostles.' The general feeling of society perpetually urges the necessity of a certain decorum in the priestly character, so that they who have had that character to sustain, feel it incumbent on them to yield to popular opinion. The Clergy, therefore, do not come drunk to church,\* nor do they reel into the stews in open day-light; whatever concessions they make to the flesh, they make in private, so as not to be seen of men; but all things short of vice, all things totally incompatible with the evangelical character, they make no scruple whatever to practice. They hunt, they shoot, they go to parties, they play at cards, they dance the gallopade, they flirt, they frolic, and act the merry fellows, with great applause.—Which of all these things were practised by the Apostles, Most Reverend Sir? and why does your Grace allow the Canons of the Church to slumber under the blanket of ancient cobwebs, when those Canons have the power to correct such gross irregularities? If it be for the purpose of establishing a priestly prerogative, or confirming an ecclesiastical immunity, the old Canons and extravaganzas, are dragged into light by most diligent civilians; but if it be requisite to correct the manners, to castigate the luxury, to diminish the wealth, to prune the excrescences, or humble the pride of the Church, then are the sleeping lions drugged with more opium, so that not even a growl can be heard to shake the nerves of the Priesthood. If it were possible to put in force all the canon and ecclesiastical laws,† whether they are *for* or *against* the Clergy, there would be no occasion, Most Reverend Sir, for this Letter. But who is to put these laws into execution? Augustus—and against whom do we invoke the laws?—against Cæsar. So that there is little hope of justice in such an appeal.

It surely is not very edifying to behold a Clergyman following the hounds, and though the fox-pursuing Parsons are of a different opinion, and defend the practise with orthodox arguments, yet they cannot persuade the people to agree with them; in vain do they sing a song concerning 'manly sport—no harm,' &c.; for their Parishioners will not listen to such trash, but indignant at the

\* It is in the memory of persons now living, indeed it has happened within this century, that a Clergyman has been wheeled out of the Church in a wheelbarrow by the Church-wardens, because he could neither stand nor walk. I have been acquainted with drunken Clergymen, at Cambridge, and the intoxication of one in particular was so remarkable, that I have often wondered how he was able to clear his head for the Sunday morning's duty, after the Saturday night's debauch. I state it also as a notorious fact, that at the present moment there are Priests in that University remarkable for their intemperate habits. There was in existence, within these five years, a clerical club, consisting of not more than six members, who used to meet at a tavern every Sunday evening, after their day's labour, and indulge in computations worthy of the hard-drinking Parsons of Queen Anne's reign.

† This is said by one who is not altogether ignorant of the civil and canon law.

indocencies of their rectors, turn away in disgust to find better examples amongst the Methodists and Independents.

But indecent and unpopular as is the spectacle of a fox-hunting Parson, perhaps one's bile is not a little agitated in these exhibitions, by that sort of vestimentary hypocrisy with which they choose to decorate the scandal: for it seems to be a received dogma of ecclesiastical decorum, that a Parson is not to hunt in a *red* coat; provided only the *scarlet* does not appear, the reverend 'successors of the Apostles' may leap over hedge and ditch without the slightest impropriety: give these 'successors of the Apostles' a black or dark grey jacket, a pair of white corduroy breeches, and handsome top boots, and then you save the character of the Church; but if a young Priest were to give the view-holloa in a *red* coat, all men would be shocked, and I suspect that ere long a grand and verbose epistle would come to him from Bishopthorpe. The same farce in clothing is kept up throughout; at balls, the 'successors of the Apostles' must appear clad in black, or any of the shades of black. Thanks, however, to the ingenuity of tailors and haberdashers, such exquisite tints have of late years been discovered in silk stockings and silk waistcoats, such delicious varieties of light black, raven black, french black, and french whites—the black has been softened into winning lavender-tints, and the white has been so dexterously made to blush a morning blush, that it requires very great ingenuity to discover a layman from a Priest in a brilliant ball-room. These, however, who are more apostolical, take the bull by the horns, and venture to place black-tinted buttons on the breasts of their shirts, a mark of the priestly office not easily to be mistaken! Of such a toilet there is great hope, and it would be a shame indeed if the black-button-bearing Priests did not become rich pluralists at last. I pray your Grace to remember them.

From persons such as the 'young gentlemen of fashion and education,' whom it is the pride of the Church to reckon amongst her Priests, and who give themselves up to all the pleasures of the age, what can be expected, in the way of instruction, in the pulpit? what, in the way of example, to the parishioners? The world expects much; and according to the fashionable notions of most Church-goers, a handsome young gentleman, with a good voice, who has lately taken his degree at the University, and who comes to his parish with some literary eclat, is considered as a rare and valuable gift, likely to be of inestimable value to his flock. In this way the frogs croaked for joy when King Log descended amongst them from the cloud-compelling Jove; and well will it be for the silly parishioners, if he contents himself with the character of Log, and does not assume that of the stork. I have known, and do know, scores of these young priestlings, who come warm from the hot-beds of the Universities. A mighty sensation they make amongst the good Christians in some country town or village; but no one inquires what they have done

hitherto in their zeal for Christ, nor what they are likely to do for the time to come. But let me tell these good Christians what they have done up to the moment that they entered into holy orders. They led the life of jovial debauchees at the University, they hunted, poached, frequented the stews, got drunk, broke lamps and windows, gave the Proctors a run, contracted enormous debts, drove tandems to London, slanged, swore, smoked, fought, roared, and rioted all the time that they were preparing themselves for the ministry of Christ's religion. But, your Grace will demand of me, how could they commit all these excesses, and yet pay sufficient attention to their academical and divinity studies. Allow me to assure your Grace, that the most distinguished scholars are frequently men of profligate habits,—but that for all ordinary purposes of academical examination, sobriety of conduct is not in the slightest degree requisite, unless a man is a perfect dunce. Your Grace has doubtless heard of the process of CRAM; and it is by this process that they prepare the young wolves who are intended to devour the flock of Christ. Paley's Evidences of Christianity, some works of Beausobre, Grotius, Tomline's Theology, the Greek \* of the Greek Testament, the dates and Geography of the

\* The mastery of the Greek is certainly the main part of an examination for holy orders. And this mastery is purely *that of a language* considered in the strange system of our Church of immense importance. Diligent inquiry is made into aorists, prepositions, canons of criticism, and all the gins and traps of hypercritical grammarians. To literary struggles of this sort, one of the most renowned Prelates of the day adds various excursive questions that by any means have any thing to do with any department of Greek. A candidate for orders, under this Prelate, has told me that he was asked several questions touching the various dialects used by Homer! the rules of the Ionic dialect, and even the laws of the Greek metres! and that he was examined in this way for upwards of an hour. And this I know to be the general practise of this Bishop's examinations.

Might not, however, a perfect knowledge of the Scriptures be sufficient, or at any rate a knowledge of the vulgate, if such knowledge is joined to a pious and moral life, and a general character for diligence and sobriety? why force the Clergy to know *two* dead languages? and why, if they must know two, should not Hebrew be one of them, in which language the Old Testament is written. But as the Bishops and their chaplains are ignorant of the Hebrew language, there is at present no fear of a third dead language for a living religion. Bishop Latimer was ignorant of the Greek tongue: would to God some of our Prelates would throw over their half knowledge of Greek, (for not three of them understand it well) and would take in some of Latimer's piety, eloquence, and honesty, as ballast instead! I find in the commission issued to Bishop Bonner, in the reign of Henry VIII., excellent injunctions to be by him observed in the ordaining of the Clergy.

'Te admonentes ut interim tuum officium juxta Evangelii normam pié et sancté exercere studeas, et ne quem ullo tempore unquam vel ad sacros ordines promoveas, vel ad curam animarum gerendarum quovis modó admittas, nisi eos duntaxat quos ad tanti et tam venerabilis officii functionem vite et morum integritas certissimis testimoniis approbata, literarum scientiæ et aliæ qualitates requisitæ ad hoc habiles et idoneos claré et luculenter ostenderint et declaraverint: nam ut maximé compertum cognitumque habemus morum omnium et maximé Christianæ Religionis corruptelam a malis pastoribus in populum emanasse, sic ut veram Christi Religionem, vitæque et moruū emendationem a bonis Pastoribus iterum delectis et assumptis in integrum restitutum iri, haud dubie speramus,' &c.—Burnet's Records, iii. 14.

Old Testament, a Latin theme, and a little more of such religious dainties, are easily *crammed* down the throats of future Priests, to be inwardly digested till they are brought to light again by the stomach-pump of your Grace's chaplain. Having received the mission of an Apostle, and a convenient veil having been thrown over his University and London excesses, the new Curate comes to receive the applause of his admiring parishioners! Peradventure he has a sonorous and musical voice—peradventure he reads the dismal truisms of his stupid sermons with an air of importance—he has a comely person; a profusion of black hair; neat black gloves, and a lily-white french cambric pocket handkerchief—he delivers the blessing with a sweet pastoral tone, or his pauses and his cadences are perfectly ravishing! All this captivates his ignorant and irreligious auditors; they do not hunger and thirst after righteousness, and therefore care not if they be not filled: they are smitten with a love of forms and ceremonies, and such trumpery they get in abundance from their Curate—*that* satisfies them, with *that* they are content, for 'they know not that they are 'miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked;' so that whilst their shepherd grates his lean and flashy song on his wretched pipes of s-rannel straw, they mistake it for most melodious music and exquisite harmony. When therefore I hear the deplorable stuff usually doled out in the pulpit by the average sort of Clergy; when I see the lifeless and unfeeling manner of the *reader*, (orator he cannot be styled): when I reflect on his general conduct, and think of the immense importance of his office, if duly administered; when I see the cold and ceremonious religion of the congregation; when I make the regular mechanical division of his flat discourse, the tiresome 'thirdly', and the foolish 'lastly', the stolen sentences, the windy periods, the sesquipedalian phraseology, the hackneyed admonition, and the hypocritical regret—I sigh to myself, and repeat the words of Job, in the vulgate translation.

' Audiivi frequenter talia, consolatores onerori omnes vos estis!

' Nunquid habebunt finem verba ventoso? Poteram et ego similia vestri loqui. Consolarer et ego vos SERMONIBUS, et moverem caput meum super vos. Usquequo affligitis animam meam et atteritis me Sermonibus?'

But all this we get from 'gentlemen of education,' whom according to the slang of the day, it is highly important to encourage with fat livings and ample pluralities. Where, however, are these scholars whom we hypocritically pretend to foster and encourage by a judicious dispensation of ecclesiastical emoluments? Who are the clerical scholars of your Grace's diocese? I know but two worthy of that name, and one of them\* has been as completely neglected and overlooked as if he had been a Priest of the Antipodes. Here,

\* The Reverend James Tate, master of Richmond School; and Mr. Archdeacon Wrangham. If learning should be encouraged according to the old fashion, who, in all Great-Britain, has a better claim to rewards than Mr. Tate?

however, we touch upon a sore subject, at which I shall but glance at present, hoping on a future occasion to pay it more attention. Let me however in passing observe, that though learning, as far as bribing can go, is more encouraged in the English Universities than in any country in the world; and that though the education of England is exclusively in the hands of the Clergy, yet never was learning at so low an ebb, and never was our state of scholarship so contemptible as at present. I do not therefore merely deny that the Clergy are learned men, but I deny that learning exists any where in England at present. We have many a gentleman who is *called* learned: many a stripling 'of prodigious talents' at both the Universities; but when their erudition is more closely examined, it sinks into insignificance, compared with the real genuine learning to be found on the Continent, where there are no bribes, no pluralities, no fellowships, no deaneries, and no bishopricks. In England we are dying of plethora; we are crammed up to the throat with good things; the morsels meant to reward scholarship are so rich and heavy, that they kill but do not nourish; and unless the Church is soon bled to syncope, we shall return to a state of middle-age darkness and ignorance, merely for want of some vigorous hand to remove superfluities. I therefore deny that the Clergy are scholars, and if they were so we might be positively certain they would not be rewarded for their scholarship. Neither is it fitting that they should be, the Apostles were not chosen to the ministry for their knowledge of Greek, their skill in metres, and their acquaintance with the lexicographers, but because it pleased God to call them 'to suffer great things for his name's sake'—not to reward them with prebends and stalls, but to make them '*suffer*' for a witness to the Gospel. Livings, however, are *not* given as a reward for learning, but for political jobbing, for the accident of birth, by family influence, by ministerial favour, and by episcopal patronage. Livings are bought and sold, regularly valued, lives insured, great and little tithes, glebe, and agistment, all calculated and estimated by dexterous attorneys.—The farce of 'rewarding merit' is a most evident imposture, nobody can believe it, and nobody does. Nevertheless it serves to round a period, and is frequently mentioned by the advocates of the Church, when pushed hard for an argument. The Church in reality is recruited by speculators who have purchased the next presentation, by idle persons who want a nominal profession, by reprobate younger sons designed for a family benefice, by the sons, nephews, and cousins of the Prelates, and by doubtful characters who wish to be considered gentlemen. I do not reckon in this class the true Pastors of the English Church, the Evangelical Curates; they are generally silenced, slighted, persecuted, and despised by their more powerful clerical coadjutors, who have received the government benefices for no good purpose.

There is not, however, a single abuse in the Church which may not be traced to one source, which is, a connexion with the State.

This connexion has given the Ministers of Christ wealth, dignities, titles, and power. It has encouraged gentlemen, and more particularly rich gentlemen, to enter into the Establishment; it has discouraged the poor and the pious; it has poisoned the sweet waters of religion, and turned that healthy stream into a frozen lifeless mass; so that we have but the form of godliness, whilst we deny its power. They that sit in the chair of Moses care only, like their predecessors, the Pharisees, to retain their temporal dominion, and their earthly treasures; they place themselves at the well of life, and cry out, 'Oh! every one that thirsteth come ye to the waters, and both ye that have, and ye that have not money, *pay tithes* for them.' This is their grand object, and all the rest of their office is but a ceremonious deception, to keep in full repair the property of the Church. If the Clergy were but half as zealous to teach the Christian faith, as they are to preserve and augment what they call their 'property,' England would indeed be a land of saints; but what with our 'loitering Bishops,' as good Latimer terms them, and what with our gentlemanly Priests, the country has sunk into a state of ignorance and irreligion, truly lamentable in this age of intellectual improvement. All knowledge, both in spiritual and temporal learning, is choked up and suffocated within the pale of the Church; but without it, there is a sunshine of information, some slight recompense for the dreary scene within.

I will dismiss this part of my subject with the powerful words of Milton. 'As for your young scholars that petition for bishopricks and deaneries, to encourage them in their studies, and that many gentlemen else will not put their sons to learning, AWAY WITH SUCH YOUNG MERCENARY STRIPLINGS, and their simoniacal fathers. God has no need of such, they have no lot or part in his vineyard. They may as well sue for nunneries, that they may have some convenient stowage for their withered daughters, because they cannot give them portions answerable to the pride and vanity they have bred them in.—*This is the root of all our mischief.* That which they alleged for the encouragement of their studies, should be cut away forthwith, as the very bait of pride and ambition, the very garbage that draws together all the fowls of prey and ruin in the land to come and gorge upon the Church. How can it be but ever unhappy to the Church of England, while she shall think to entice men to the pure service of God, by the same means that were used to tempt our Saviour to the service of the Devil, by laying before him honour and preferment?'

And now, Most Reverend Sir, a few words are due on the probable fate of the Church of England. It is my belief that all Church property will, ere long, be confiscated. A general feeling pervades society, that the sun of the Establishment has passed its summer

\* Animadversions upon the Remonstrant's Defence against Smectymnus.

solstice, and is rapidly descending into the wintry signs. Already does this full-grown tree shed its leaves; the axe is laid to its root, and because it brings not forth good fruit, it will be hewn down and cast into the fire. It is in vain to conceal the truth any longer that the Church is in imminent danger. A multitude of circumstances have occurred of late, to accelerate its great day of reckoning, which will probably arrive before the expiration of ten years. Events unfavourable to sacerdotal power advance now full gallop; they hitherto have approached slowly, uncertainly, and with long delays; but now, circumstances so unexpected take place, that no man can say what may not happen before the year is ended. The extortion of the Catholic Emancipation from the reluctant hands of Government—the repeal of the Test and Corporation Act—the French Revolution, with the abolition of the Established Church of France—and the all but certainty of the speedy fall of the Irish Church Establishment, would be sufficient of themselves, to shew the dangerous predicament of the English Church. To these causes however may be added the great increase of Dissenters, their wealth, vigilance, zeal, and activity; their virtuous dislike of the Church—the general education of the poor—the increased knowledge, and the thirst for reform, amongst the multitude—the monstrous abuses of the Church itself—the worldly, secular, avaricious, and pompous lives of the Prelates—the general grasping for wealth amongst the inferior Clergy—the hateful system of tithes—the unpopular and aristocratic feeling of the Priesthood in general—and the close and intimate union of the Church with all men and measures that are arbitrary and overbearing.

Let us not, however, omit in this catalogue of causes that which is the most honourable, a want of a purer Church, felt with a deep sense of piety by the middling classes of society. For we must not imagine that political agitators only and Dissenters are inimical to the Establishment: there is a large and respectable party within the Church, and deeply attached to the doctrines of the Church, which nevertheless is earnestly bent on a thorough and radical reformation of the Establishment. Every notion of reform is, however, steadily and haughtily opposed by the Bishops, who in the uniform policy of their worldly system, choose to consider the property and secular power of the Clergy as an assential part of that religion of which they are ministers. The many plans of amelioration suggested to the ecclesiastical rulers, are scornfully rejected; the slightest hint at amendment is scouted as the suggestion of fanaticism or sedition; and nothing is supposed possible, in the way of improvement, to a system which merely consists in collecting money and reading printed prayers. Our modern Priests, truly, exhibit a profound ignorance of the operations of the human mind; they are as careless and inattentive to the signs of the times, as if the opinions of society in England were no less stable and immovable than the opinions of the priest-ridden populace of Thibet. They view themselves, and their



Establishment, with boundless complacency; their own snug palaces and parsonages are, in their eyes, part of a system which, if universally extended, would produce universal happiness: and all that is wanting to introduce millenium, is a payment of tithe over all the habitable globe, to the protestant partridge-shooting hierarchy of the thirty-nine articles. Hence the sweet encomiums that they pronounce upon themselves and their system in their sermons, charges, and speeches. Hence the strong indifference with which they listen to plans of reform and suggestions of improvement. Within the last twenty years the Emperor of China published a law prohibiting any new invention, 'because the Chinese nation had arrived at a state of 'perfection which it would be impiety to endeavour to improve.' This edict was in the very spirit of the Church, which, though it all of a sudden and in the course of one year burst into existence, from a system totally opposite to that now established both in faith, practice, and principle, yet never since that day has changed the slightest particle of its abuses, or altered the smallest fraction of its corruptions. It is not so very long since the doctrine and discipline of the present Church of England were considered and treated as felony and heresy. It is a<sup>2</sup> still less time since the Church was abolished by Act of Parliament, and restored to its former situation by another Act of Parliament; but neither the memory of its modern origin, nor of its entire abolition by law, can rouse it to view with attention and prudence that dark cloud gathering against it in the horizon. In vain for the Clergy does the thunder roll and the lightening flash in the distant clouds; they hear not, and they see not: and as the flood came upon the Autediluvians, when they were dancing, feasting, marrying, and giving in marriage, so will the day of confiscation come upon the Priesthood, when they are gathering tithe, and feasting in their pluralities. It will find the Bishops moving up the steps of the Mithraic ladder to the seventh heaven of the primacy; those Right Reverend Fathers will be elbowing and pushing one another in their scramble for translations, grasping at more preferment, cramming their sons and nephews with spiritual guineas, bullying the Dissenters, and praising themselves—the inferior Clergy will be severally at the card-table, watering place, or cock-pit—they will be leaping double ditches, imprisoning poachers, taking tithe in kind, dancing the gallopade, or firing off their artillery at grand battus, when the deluge of reform will come upon them in a moment, and overwhelm them in a wave of 'apostolical' poverty and 'primitive' economy.

Indeed, indeed, Most Reverend Sir, it is high time that that day were come; and if I could be certain that either by my previous exertions, or by this present Letter, or by what I trust to do in this way in the future, I had roused but a small part of the people even in your diocese to accelerate that day, I should feel that I was amply rewarded, however dire a storm might be raised amongst the Aristocracy, who, with the Clergy, are the only part of society interested in supporting the Establishment with its present abuses.—

But those abuses cannot last for ever. The people of England must at last be roused to a unanimous resistance against this mighty evil. Every religious person, and every individual of liberal politics, will at last unite, though with varied motives, in harpooning the great Leviathan. The day of ecclesiastical persecution is passed for ever, and though the Clergy have the wish to exercise tyrannical severities on their opponents, yet they have no longer the power. The false plea of religion at present interwoven with the question of Church-property, will be at last despised as an impotent snare, and the Clergy will learn, though too late, that the people of England can neither be intimidated by terror, nor cajoled by deceit.

If it be asked, then, what does in reality preserve the Establishment? I answer, the interests of the Aristocracy and the policy of Government. It is not to be supposed that the Whigs and Tories, who nominate two-thirds of the House of Commons, and who entirely constitute the House of Lords, wish to uphold the Church for the salvation of their souls. Those crafty politicians either know full well that the Establishment is inimical to the Christian religion, or else they are indifferent to every religion. But they also know that the Church has hitherto been the great support of the state-machine; that the Clergy have uniformly ranked themselves on the side of oppression and arbitrary measures; and that whenever a blow of violent power is to be carried into execution, they can reckon on the Clergy for support, though all the rest of the world should be in arms against them. Ever since the Church of England has been invented, the Protestant tithe-takers have been leagued with Government; their maxims have constantly tended to oppression whenever an opportunity has offered; they have always preferred injustice and severity to justice and mercy; and never for a single moment have they joined the people, excepting on one occasion when in an agony of fear for their own property, they consented, by a most opportune rebellion, to dethrone their lawful King James II. The Clergy have once, by their innate love of violence and tyranny, been the immediate cause of the ruin of the monarchy. Archbishop Laud brought Charles I. to the block, and lived to see both Church and Constitution destroyed, as the reward of his despotic measures. The son of this beheaded King was dethroned by the Clergy; and the Clergy would long ago have brought the kingdom to irretrievable ruin, if the Government had not withdrawn itself in time from the influence of such dangerous allies. The Catholic Question was the especial favourite and peculiar pet of the Clergy, and long, far too long, was that act of justice withheld, merely to please the reverend disturbers of the public repose. At last, by dint of terror, the Government was scared into yielding the question of Catholic Emancipation;—the ministers of the King had to choose between the rebellion of the Clergy and the rebellion of Ireland, and having duly weighed the peril on either hand, they perceived that five millions of rebels, with nothing to oppose them but mutinous

troops, were more to be dreaded than raging rectors and seditious curates. The Clergy did all they could, whilst the Catholic Relief Bill was pending, to raise a rebellion in the kingdom, but their efforts were unavailing, notwithstanding that they joined themselves heart and hand with their natural enemies, the Dissenters, in the pious and praiseworthy undertaking of a general uproar. Had that question been delayed for two years only, what would *now* have become of Ireland? Where would have been that fair portion of the kingdom, immediately after the news of the French Revolution? The tri-coloured flag would have this moment been floating over Dublin, and even for the wooden walls of old England the sempstresses would have been preparing the three terrific colours. All this would have been the result of clerical councils; and if the English Church in Ireland is allowed long to continue in existence, the Government must be prepared for events which even a child might predict.

Wherever then we turn our eyes, whether to the passed time, or to the times within our memory, we find the operations of the Church inimical to the repose and prosperity of the kingdom.—The Clergy were mischievously clamorous in urging the American war,\* they were equally clamorous and mischievous in goading the Government and the people to carry on the war against the first French revolution; and if they had the slightest chance of success, they would again blow the trumpet of discord to dethrone the King of the French, and to replace on its pedestal the old Dagon of superstition and despotism, whose shivered trunk is now mouldering at Holyrood House. An established Priesthood never can be at rest, it matters not to what sect they belong, for whilst they are in power and dignity, whilst they are the select and high-paid Brahmins of the State, whilst they are a powerful and authorized caste which the legislature delighteth to honour, then of necessity they must be the enemies of liberty, the chosen champions of despotism, the determined opposers of the improvement of mankind. If the Established Church were abolished to-morrow, and the sect of Ranters, or the disciples of Johanna, or the followers of John Wesley, declared to be the dominant sect to whom tithes were due, then in ten years would the new Church be in every respect as corrupt as that under which the kingdom groans at present.—Tithes and power are an unfailing receipt to turn even Angels into useless or mischievous ministers; it is a nepenthe to change the fairest nature into the foulest deformity. Thus do we behold in this land the strange and monstrous spectacle of the fairest religion united with the most corrupt Church, the purest form of godliness linked and chained to the most depraved of secular institutions.

*Mortua quin-etiam jungebat corpora vivis.*

\* See Burke's Letters, and the various pamphlets of the day.

As, however, there is now a call in the land for a thorough reform in our Church, and as that call is made in a manner which cannot long be resisted, it behoves all friends of the country to consider in what way this reform is to be carried into execution. The method is plain and simple. Take the New Testament in your hand, and make that your guide. Let our Church be such as it evidently was when the New Testament was written, and then you may hope to have the religion of the New Testament, of which at present we possess but a faint and uncertain shadow. Let all tithes be abolished, and let all Church-property be confiscated. Let the Church of England be put on a footing with all the other sects in the land.—Abolish the Ecclesiastical Courts. Repeal every Act of Parliament that has been passed from the Reign of Edward VI. to the present reign in favour of the Church. Dismiss the Bishops from the House of Lords; but all other matters relating to the future state and government of the Church, leave entirely to the Clergy, to be by them decided as they shall think proper. The State must repudiate the Church, and the Church the State. It must be an entire separation and divorce, without a prospect of a union at any future period.

If a question be raised as to the *political* management of Church-property, it seems that great benefit might accrue to the State if a sale of it were to take place, according to some fair and equitable arrangement. Suppose, for instance, that all who now pay tithes to spiritual persons for spiritual purposes, should be compelled to purchase a perpetual release, by paying a ten years' income of the tithe to Government. Thus, if a person paid £100. per annum in tithe, he would have to pay £1,000. to Government, and be released for ever from any future payment. Surely the tithe-payers would not much complain of such an arrangement; but if the Clergy should complain, I answer, that all present incumbents should be allowed to retain their benefices for life, by which means no person in possession would be at all injured; and as for those future Parsons who are not yet in being, it cannot be said that they who do not exist would be injured by such an arrangement; for no one hereafter would take holy orders who did not know what he had to expect. If, however, some should persist in thinking that we hereby injure some embryo Parsons, as well might it be said that we are cruel to a crocodile when we break a crocodile's egg. The cruelty is in imagination, and not in reality; for the crocodile is not yet in being.

If the Church property be taken at five millions per annum, (though some rate it much higher,) there would by this scheme be paid fifty millions sterling to Government, deducting a certain sum for purchasing an ample landed estate for the perpetual repair and ornament of the Cathedrals. On this subject considerable liberality might be allowed; I would grant an ample revenue for the purpose,

more ample than any Cathedral possesses at present ; but the rents of the estates, and the disbursements of the rents, should be in the hands of commissioners, two-thirds of whom should be laymen, nominated by Government.

Let not your Grace mistake my meaning ; I do not propose to keep the Cathedrals in repair, from an attachment to them *as temples*, but as splendid edifices, exhibiting all the possible beauties and grandeur of the gothic architecture : and though I know that they were built by the Priests of an abolished religion, yet their present possession might be conceded to the Protestant Clergy, who represent the creed of the majority, and who have been the possessors for a time sufficient to give a title by law. If, however, at some future period the decided majority of the inhabitants of a county should become Roman Catholic, then it would be but just that the Priests of the religion of that majority should again take possession of the Cathedral which was originally built, founded, and endowed by Roman Catholics.

Thus have I briefly expressed my sentiments on the CORRUPTIONS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND ; for though I have not offered your Grace so much as a *tithe* of what might and ought to be said on a question of such vast importance, yet I prefer presenting my other oblations at a future opportunity.

I subscribe myself,

Your Grace's

Obedient humble Servant,

R. M. BEVERLEY.

*Beverley, 19th February, 1831.*

## POSTSCRIPT.

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Some few friends will perhaps expostulate with me on the boldness of sentiment in this Letter, and will offer the arguments usual on these occasions. As it would be no difficult matter to prophecy every syllable of their remonstrances, I beg they will neither trouble me nor themselves with unavailing words. I did not begin to build my tower without having first calculated the expense. I know the cost full well, and am prepared to meet it. But let me assure them, that I duly estimate also the exquisite baseness of some persons, who, agreeing with me, in private, and encouraging me by all the poor arts of which they are masters, affect to regret, in public, the exertions I make for that reform of which they are the traitors. Their rule of action is widely different from mine; they *play at* patriotism, they use it as a theatrical sport, they trifle with the public good, and do not let their zeal go beyond empty words, and those words they take good care to manage according to the cravings of their own interest, and the rules of fashionable society. But there must be a seriousness in politics as well as in religion, and unless a man feels the good of his country at his heart, and exerts himself for it as a *religious duty*, he will some time or other infallibly discover his hypocrisy, and stand exposed to all the world a rogue in principle, and a traitor in action. England is disgraced at present with a sorry tribe of patriots, and it is not in Yorkshire that we should seek for the genuine breed. But enough of these men, whose shuffling policy I thoroughly comprehend.—As for myself, be assured, it is for no private advantage that I stand up, without coadjutor, in fighting the battle against ecclesiastical abuses; it is a serious inconvenience to me in many respects, but chiefly because it draws me away from other pursuits which interest me much more, and which are much discomposed by works of this sort. But I feel it to be a duty thus to exert myself in expressing the popular wish, when no one else in my rank of life has the courage to open his caitiff lips on the subject. Perhaps the day is not far distant, when the people may remember those who shewed themselves their friends in the hour of need, and not forget those who betrayed them. I, however, want no man's applause, and care for no man's blame; my motives are higher than to be influenced by such considerations: but, I trust, that whether it be through evil report or good report, the people will find

‘————— my voice unchanged,  
 ‘ To hoarse or mute, though fallen on evil days,  
 ‘ On evil days though fallen, and evil tongues,  
 ‘ In darkness and with dangers compassed round,  
 ‘ And solitude—YET NOT ALONE.’

## APPENDIX.

## COMPARATIVE TABLE

*Of the Cost of Religion in all the Christian World.*

## I.

Name of the Nation.	Number of Hearers	Expense on Clergy, per Million of Hearers.	Total Expenditure.
France .....	30,000,000	£35,000	£1,050,000
United States, America...	9,600,000	60,000	576,000
Spain.....	11,000,000	100,000	1,100,000
Hungary—Catholics .....	4,000,000	80,000	320,000
Calvinists ....	1,000,000	60,000	63,000
Lutherans....	650,000	40,000	26,000
Italy .....	19,391,000	40,000	776,000
Austria.....	18,918,000	50,000	950,000
Switzerland .....	1,720,000	50,000	87,000
Prussia .....	10,536,000	50,000	527,000
German States .....	12,763,000	60,000	765,000
{ Holland.....	2,000,000	80,000	160,000
{ Netherlands .....	3,000,000	35,000	105,000
Denmark.....	1,700,000	70,000	119,000
Sweden .....	3,400,000	70,000	238,000
{ Russia-Greek Church.	34,000,000	15,000	510,000
{ Catholics & Lutherans	8,000,000	50,000	409,000
Christians in Turkey ...	6,000,000	30,000	180,000
South-America .....	15,000,000	30,000	450,000
Dispersed Christians.....	3,000,000	50,000	180,000

## II.

ENGLAND.....	6,000,000	1,266,000	7,596,000
IRELAND.....	400,000	3,250,000	1,300,000

N. B. Thus the Clergy of the first table, of 195,678,000 hearers, receive £8,591,000.  
And the Clergy of the second table, of 6,400,000 hearers, receive £8,896,000.

## NOTE TO PAGE 23.

It is generally understood, that the Chapter of York Cathedral has renounced the plan of removing the choir screen. A letter from the Dean of York, addressed to the Subscribers, and published in the provincial newspapers of Saturday, February 19, is supposed to announce to the public this welcome fact. The editors of the newspapers publish the determination of the Chapter as an undoubted fact, and