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# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

## THE CHURCH OF GOD?



LONDON:

W. H. BROOM, 28 PATERNOSTER ROW.

## PREFATORY NOTE.

THE following "LETTER" was written by a clergyman who had withdrawn from the ministry of the Established Church of England, to another clergyman who had blamed and publicly challenged him for doing so. It contains a statement of his reasons for leaving the Establishment.

The writer's authorisation of the publication of his "*Letter*" in its present form has been granted.

In his letter, granting permission to issue it, he states that he does not mean it as an attack on the Establishment: nor do those who now send it forth afresh. It is not in controversy, nor as seeking to pull down the Established Church it is done, but as a plain testimony from God to the consciences of His ensnared people, especially of godly clergymen, if, peradventure, He may use it for their deliverance.

The writer of this "letter" began with being a sincere and extreme High Churchman. He was converted to God, and became a most diligent and devoted clergyman; but light from God's Word broke in upon his mind as to his position; he saw it was untenable, and withdrew from it; and in the following pages he states his reasons for doing so, which now form a testimony to others who remain. If he could not remain in the Established Church of England with "a good conscience," can they do so?

The judgment-seat of Christ is before us, and we should have a care lest by our association, our ways and conduct, we be heaping up "wood, hay, and stubble" against "that day," when "the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is."

"Our mouth is open unto you, our heart is enlarged. Ye are not straitened in us, but ye are straitened in your own bowels. Now, for a recompence in the same (I speak as unto my children), be ye also enlarged. Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols; for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty" (2 Cor. vi. 11-18).

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# THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND THE CHURCH OF GOD?

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DEAR Mr —, In replying to the question, Why I left the Church of England? I replied, not that the world was in the Church of England, as you say —no such thing at all; but that I found the system I was mixed up with *to be the world, and not the Church of God at all.* That is a very distinct thing from worldly people being in the Church.

I said to you very plainly that your question assumed that the Establishment was *the ora* Church, which I did not admit. Now this is a very plain ground; it is to me precisely the ground of importance; and a plain truth which, when once apprehended, frees the conscience of many an anxious person. The position in which you desired to place me is also evident from the expression, you will take up “my aspersions of the Church of England.” I have no pleasure in casting any aspersions on it; to free my own and others’ conscience from all that may be, or tend to evil, I do desire.

Further, sir, I have to admit that the

*manifested progress of Popery, of which the system of the Church of England is the instrument, renders me less jealous and less anxious to avoid the plain expression of what one may feel painfully, and yet, from ten thousand associations, be unwilling to declare, lest some rude Edomite might suppose for a moment one felt with him. My mind has long admitted its tendency; and I have acted on it. The signs of it are too publicly apparent not to call forth at least some additional warning voice. If mine be so very feeble and despised, as I am sure it is, may the Lord give it truth and affection, and therefore His own force.*

The Oxford tracts and their prevalence cannot but have drawn your attention, as they have of bishops, and even newspapers; and recently we have had a very remarkable sign of the times—the highest ecclesiastical authority in the country pronouncing a definite judgment, that prayers for the dead are not incon-



sistent with the doctrines of the Church of England. You may say this is not right: her godly ministers protest against it. Be it so. They cannot help it; and if they say, we declare it is not right, then is the judgment of God on them, because they will not plainly act on and abide by what is right, and renounce what is wrong. What is the resource from the evil proposed by the ——? An appeal to the Privy Council. What a condition for the Church of God to be placed in, that when a heresy comes in, and is sanctioned, its appeal is to the Privy Council to get rid of it! But I allude to this merely as a sign; and whether the Church exculpate herself or not, a sign it is to them that have eyes to see.

I believe, dear sir, this, that at the time of the Reformation two great elements entered into the composition of the Church of England, as it is called: one, the power of the Spirit of God in the preached word, which was directed *against* the Church of England, or of Rome in England then subsisting, and which was carried on by a system of irregularities—Latimer, Bernard Gilpin, and a host of others, many whose names are better known in heaven than on earth, preaching and teaching all about the country, without regard to parish or anything—but which was the power of light against the power of darkness, and that was blest.

The other element was partly through the fears of Churchmen, and mainly through the interference of the crown and secular power—a system in which, in order to maintain unity in the whole country, and that even to conciliate Ro-

man Catholics for political purposes, under Queen Elizabeth, a *vast mass of association with Roman Catholic forms and the value of ordinances was preserved and asserted*, by which a connexion with the great *apostasy* was kept up; which, although the power of truth and the providence of God may have a long while hindered its effect, is now beginning distinctly and publicly to show itself, and will, I have no doubt—woe is me that I should have to say it—result in this once comparatively happy country being immersed in and given up to darkness and opposition to God. Can you suppose, sir, that this gives me satisfaction or pleasure in saying it? The Lord knows who grieves over it most—those who sanction the system that leads to it, or such as in sorrow of heart have gone out without the camp, though bearing His reproach, and in word and work become a witness, however feeble.

A man cannot, while acting in and sanctioning a system which involves these evils, honestly bear witness against the evils he partakes of and upholds. The whole system is thoroughly woven together. This is the position of a minister of the Establishment: it cannot be denied.

But though the truth might be preached by individuals, which I do not controvert, the consequence of the preservation of *this Popish parochial unity was the entire forfeiture by the Establishment of the title to being a Church at all*—not merely by accident, but by its very essence and system. There was a transfer of all the inhabitants of a parish to a Protestant form from a Popish, *but no gathering of saints at all*. It was mat-

ter of legal penalty not to go to church. The parochial centre was there; the minister the law provided was there; the legal right to seats was there; the whole framework of ordinances for the whole parish was there; and, I repeat, there was a legal penalty for not attending. *These are matters of historical fact.* The whole population, as such, were transferred in geographical divisions to another form of worship, and there was no gathering of the saints, though there was, to a considerable extent, the truth preached.

That was *the system* of the Church of England, *not its abuse.* Those who refused to come were termed Popish *recusants*, and dealt with as such; and those whose consciences refused submission were very extensively subjected to punishment and imprisonment. And this is still the boasted *principle* of the Establishment. The toleration that there is, forced on by the conscience of others, has in nowise altered the *principle* of the Establishment. Her boast is, that she provides religious instruction for the whole population of the country: the truth of this we may shortly inquire, but it is her boast; but when I begin to seek what is meant by religious instruction, I find this a most deceptive and inadequate statement.

Her system, be there instruction or not, be there bad or good, is a *system of ordinances by which the whole population are received as Christian*, whether they believe or not, and are dealt with as such by her ordinances, with which, according to her directions, they are all bound to comply; so that those who do not are called recusants, dissenters, and

schismatics. So that it is really a provision, *not for the instruction of all, but for calling all Christians, whether they are so or not.* Do I go into a town or country parish, if there should not be any dissenting body, it would be the boast that they were all Church of England people—though a Christian minister within her pale would perhaps avow he was satisfied there was not one who was a Christian, or knew the Lord, amongst them, and would preach to them as entirely unconverted people, and often does so very faithfully!

You say that discipline is to be exercised. In fact, it is not, nor could be scripturally: if it were, it would be merely to make the world decent, not to keep the Church holy; and discipline with unbelievers is merely entirely deceiving the souls of all—the height of confusion and absurdity. My assertion then is, that the Establishment is not, unless in self-assumed responsibility, *the Church, or a Church at all*—is not a body that God owns as such, save for judgment. And yet she treats as schismatics those who separate from her pale.

This short remark sets this clear. If a man left the Church of God, he was out of the manifested body of God's saved people altogether. But further, if a man at Corinth left the Church of Corinth, he left the Church of God—he left God's assembly. *Could that be said of the Church of England?* I find no such thing as a National Church in Scripture. Is the Church of England—was it ever, God's assembly in England? I read of the "Churches of Galatia," which was a province or country—that is, God's assemblies in that country; but the very

idea of an assembly of God is lost in the claim and boast of the Establishment.

Now, dear sir, instead of this being an aspersion on the Church of England, it is her boast. In her effort to build new churches now—may the Lord turn it to blessing by sending the truth into them, for He is sovereign, and not tied to our ways or any but His own—her plea is to keep pace with the *population*, not with the growth and extension of the *Church of God*. Such is the practical evidence of a fact too notorious to require much proof. . . .

Facts and documents alike prove that in the principle of the Establishment "*the Church and State are but different aspects of the same body*," to use the expression of one of her distinguished defenders. It seems to me to be an awful thing to pretend to be *the Church of England*, if you are not *the Church of God there*. *Whose Church are you? or what new thing have you introduced?*

These are questions which ought to be answered before charges of schism and dissent are launched out so readily against those who cannot form their consciences on the model of a Church which is not the Church of God. How is it schism to leave you if you are not the Church of God? What is schism? Would it be schism to divide Turks, or to divide Christians from them? *Would it be schism to seek the unity of all saints, apart from the world?* Were the Establishment blameless, to force a weak Christian's conscience on an indifferent party would be schism.

But what do I find in the history of the Establishment? Why, that in

order to enforce unity, or rather uniformity, and that *even in apparel* (and that can hardly be necessary for the unity of the Spirit), nearly two thousand of her godly parochial ministers were ejected at once. If it be said, this was by Act of Parliament, not by the act of the Church, I answer, then, You have for secular reasons made yourselves the slaves, the helpless slaves, of whatever the world chooses to impose upon you; and that *in the most important point of ecclesiastical discipline*. And the unhappy excuse—what a plea for one who is jealous for the actual real maintaining of Christ's honour in the Church—that the Parliament and King are part of the Church! *Who made them its judicial visitors?*

But even this poor excuse is taken away now, and we have the modern evidence that Roman Catholics, Socinians—in short, the world, can dispose of the whole ecclesiastical arrangements of the country; and a Chancellor of the Exchequer can get up and say he has considered the state of the country, and it can spare ten bishoprics, and they are taken away. This may seem to your minds order; but to us the authority of Christ over His Church seems cast to *the winds* by it, and His honour despised.

. . . Such is the history of the Church of England. To turn to Scripture, or its idea of a Church, no one thing the least like it can be traced in the New Testament, or Old either. When you speak of the world being in the Church, in the sense of it as referred to in Scripture, it could not be in the Establishment. I admit there were false professors—but how was this? While the Church *was in*

a state which Scripture recognised at all, I read of false brethren coming in unawares: this could not happen in the Establishment. There is nothing for them to come into *unawares*. All, false and true, are bound to go there; and if they preserve a good worldly character, welcome in theory, and without it even, in practice. In Scripture I find a *within* and *without*—a direction to judge them that are within. *This state of things does not exist in the Establishment.* Her aim and boast is to have the whole population *within*. I repeat, there is no pretence of being a *Church* at all in the Establishment.

And really, sir, when you deny that the openly profane and ungodly are in the Church of England, in your own sense of it, you make an assertion of a very strange character to those who are familiar with facts. People's consciences must answer this for themselves. Will you allow me to ask you, and beg you to read it over, Is the Communion Service intended for members of the Church of England, or for those without? for believers or unbelievers? for people under the law or gospel? But I will not suffer myself, in the Lord's mercy, to be led away from great principles. I believe it was meant in honest hatred of sin. I honour this. But on what ground it can be defended by a minister of the Church of England now, it is hard to tell. Were I to use an *argumentum ad hominem*, I could remind you that, in the homilies, the right use of ecclesiastical discipline is one of the three marks whereby the true Church may be known. How this consists with the Church of England being a true

Church, and avowing what it does in the Communion Service, is hard for a simple mind to tell.

You can now pretty well understand why I speak not of the *world being* in the Church of England, but of *its being the world*, and not the *Church* at all. It is notorious that, if they be not actually Dissenters, the population of a parish, town, or county, *even if they be in pitch darkness, are all members of the Church of England, so called. They would call themselves so. They are called so, and boasted of by their ministers as such.* They are entitled to be received as such, if not notoriously profligate, though they may not be able to tell you who Jesus was, and deny in their ignorance every truth of the Gospel. And that this is a fact, and not a fiction, is known to every one acquainted with the state of the country: *that is, the world behaving themselves so as not to shock public decency are entitled to be received at communion, because the system rests on ordinances, not on faith.* And a minister faithful as to the truth he preached would address the whole congregation in the services of the Church of England *as his brethren and as the Church*; and when preaching to them, perhaps honestly and faithfully tell them they were all unconverted, and unless they repented they would all perish! In a word, he would address them, when he told his own mind, as faithfully serving Christ in the Spirit, as unbelieving sinners; *and when he recited the Church's forms, and told hers, he would address them as congregated saints!* Which is right? But, first, which is true? Who is the faith-

ful minister (I put it to your own conscience), the man who in a dark parish, or as to the great body of every parish, preaches the Gospel to them as sinners, poor lost sinners, *or the minister who treats them all as the congregated Church of God? The latter minister, on your own statement, and the clear avowal of the Prayer Book, acts in the mind of the Church of England!*

The truth is, you have two irreconcilable elements at work within her pale—TRUTH in the hearts of many of her ministers, and in a feeble measure in her Articles; and a SYSTEM OF OLD BOTTLES, which cannot bear the new wine of the kingdom. *In these times of God's dealings they cannot both go on together* (2 Cor. vi. 14-18).

I say, then, that the constitution is worldly, because she contemplates by her constitution—it is her boast—the *population, not the saints.*

If circumstances have driven many outside her pale, she treats them as dissenters and schismatics, and so do you, and therefore in principle avow and admit the charge. *The man who would say that the Church of England is a gathering of saints, must be a very odd man, or a very bold one.* The parishioners are bound to attend by her principles. Are they all saints in theory? If you say, "Yes," I answer, *Then it is not God's theory, and judgment is pronounced on the question.*

But there are other points connected with this point, of theory and discipline, which are to me very important.

We are habitually told not to judge, and this sounds well; but it is a very awful and anti-gospel, and at the

same time a very hollow principle. True it is that I am not to pass a human judgment on a brother, as regards God's final estimate of him; nor to say, he being before me as such, as to God's present acceptance of him. This is clear; but to treat all as Christians *because they have been baptized in their infancy, and connected with the formularies, is a very uncharitable deception;* and you know that as a Christian minister you do not. The system of your Church may do it, but I am persuaded your heart does not. It could not, if the spirit of Christ's love be there, neither then should our acts or words. They forget that Christianity begins with this, "The love of Christ constrains me, because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead." And if a system of ordinances have concealed these truths; if the Church has learnt to rest in the ordinances, in lieu of *life* and its necessity; *it is just in the practical state of apostasy from which I have to flee, in love to my own soul and that of others.*

Next, I believe that the notion that I cannot recognise brethren, as such, is an abominable delusion of Satan, to the destruction of the grand witness of Christ on the earth. I am told not to judge who are and who are not. I answer, *the practical recognition of them is the principle of the dispensation.* Knowing that all are dead, the recognition that any are alive *is the joy of charity.* Their corporate union and worship is Christ's witness in the earth, "*that they may be one, that the world may believe that Thou hast sent Me.*" And though the disregard of the unity of worship of

the saints, known to each other as such, may seem to a carnal man as charity, *it really destroys all the first springs of holy affection. What would become of family affections if all were reduced to uncertainty as to who was a brother, and who was not? How can I greet with cordial affection, as of one heart and one mind, my brethren in the Lord, if I do not and am not to know who they are?*

Is there not, according to Scripture, to be some set of people who are *all of one heart and one mind*? Is not charity injured, and God's witness of love from each injured and destroyed, *by this cold and heartless doctrine*, that I am not to judge who are brethren in Christ and who are not? "*Love the brethren*," says the Spirit of God. Nay, I am told you must not judge who are and who are not! *The first precept of charity is annulled by this system. "Hereby shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another."* How can this great witness and test of discipleship be manifested if there be not a mutual recognition of one another by the disciples of the Lord as such? This fair form of worldly charity is, I believe, a very evil delusion of the enemy. And is it not the fact you do judge, you preach to many as *unconverted*, and you converse with others as *saints*? You must do so if you have "the Spirit of Christ."

Further, as to discipline, there is not otherwise a body capable of discipline as led of the Spirit of God, by which alone it can be rightly exercised. Discipline by a body of unconverted persons is ridiculous. A remark of your friend Mr — is an evidence of this. He says, speaking of those who complained of

mixed communion, "Have you followed the Scriptures? If your brother has driven you from participating in this ordinance, he has certainly trespassed against you." This is a poor and strained way of taking a brother's trespass against me, and it is besides a piece of sophistry; for my difficulty is not that my brother has trespassed, but that you have *by your system* gathered a heap of people *who are not brethren at all*, and would reject and scorn the title of saints in heart and life, so that it is a very poor sophistry. But let that pass. "Have you gone to him alone?" says Mr —, "then taken two or three more? and, if that failed, told it to your minister?" Why "your minister?" because the use of the Scriptural direction, "Tell it to the *Church*," would have laid bare the inconsistent and absurd position he was in. If he had said, "Tell it to the Church" or assembly, every straightforward person would have seen its absurdity: there was *really no Church to tell it to!* But to be in a position *which obliges one to change the Word of God*, is just the expression of unwilling consciousness that the *Word of God condemns my position*. It condemns it in the very point at issue between us. *This holy discipline is destroyed*, as well as charity, *by the world being called the Church*; and "put out from among yourselves that wicked person" is as impracticable as "love the brotherhood" Everybody knows the fact.

Now as to one or two objections you make. First, you refer to Israel. There was abuse, you say, but they were not to leave it. In the first place, we are not Jews, but Christians. Judaism was

*an elect nation*; there could be no such thing as leaving it. *Christianity is not, but a gathering of saints.* God has not recorded His name in the English nation; but wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, there is Jesus in the midst of them. What the temple was to a Jew, the gathering of the saints is to me, because I am a *Christian*. My complaint of the Establishment is, that it is not, and never was, a *gathering of saints*. If a man ceased to be a Jew, he ceased to be of God's people altogether. That nation and its ordinances were wholly, solely, and exclusively God's people, sanctuary, and place: to leave them was to apostatise from God. They were gathered, not in spiritual worship, but to carnal ordinances, imposed not *by conversion of heart*, but by Jewish parentage. The Church of God alone is analogous in one place. The Establishment has no pretence to be what Israel was as God's only place of abode. Where Judaism and Christianity are entirely different from each other in principle, in nationalism, and obligation of carnal ordinances, there *it has followed Judaism*, and then uses this as an argument why it should not be left. If this argument proves anything, *it proves its apostasy*. Two or three gathered together in Christ's name has the authority of unity which Israel had of old, not a sorry imitation of that which the gospel treats as beggarly elements, and now equivalent to idolatry (see Gal. iv.) and carnal ordinances. Israel, I repeat, was a national election; Christianity is not. The laws of the country were God's own laws, the presence of God was there, and the abuses and corruptions did not alter that. A

person could not leave it, and be in the place of God's worship and God's ordinance. Now the place of God's worship and God's ordinance is *where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name* (Matt. xviii. 20.; John. iv.); and this the Establishment is not, *but a provision of ordinances for the population in confessed imitation of Judaism*. The Established Church of England is therefore *no Church of God at all*.

Next you refer to the seven Churches. This, there is more occasion to answer specially, as it is the common resort of argument on the question. The simple answer is, they were God's *Churches or assemblies* in the places mentioned, and they could not be left; corruptions are no ground for leaving the Church of GOD. The Church of GOD cannot be left, and a man be in the path of salvation in so doing. These were the Churches of GOD—the assemblies of GOD in those different towns—gatherings of saints, although carelessness had introduced corruption. The Establishment is not this at all. Were the apostles to address an epistle to the Church of GOD which is at Liverpool, or London, there is no gathered body distinct from the world who could receive and act upon the letter. Where the epistle says, Ye have among you such and such, and calls for repentance, were they not to put them out, or would they otherwise have repented? Where is the body, then, which could act thus, when you are preaching to an indiscriminate heap of unconverted people? In a word, there was a known body which could act by the leading of the Spirit of GOD in primitive times. There was no direction to leave these Churches, be-

cause they were Churches. The Establishment has no such claim of being a *Church*, and I do not leave it properly, but have nothing to say to it, *because it is not one*. The Establishment does not, nor ever did, stand on the ground of these Churches or local assemblies of God at all, and has no principle of their structure, order, or constitution. I should think it a great sin to leave a Church of God because corruptions were found in it; BUT THE ESTABLISHMENT IS A GREAT NATIONAL, SECULAR SYSTEM, AND NOT THE CHURCH OF GOD AT ALL.

Another assertion you make is: I have evil in myself, and that I cannot leave, and therefore it is a hopeless thing to seek purity. This, forgive me for saying it, is an ugly argument:—"There is no hope: we will continue to do evil." But it is a poor piece of sophistry. I cannot leave the evil in my flesh, so I remain in the body. I can leave the evil around me, so I am to remain in that too! You will admit this is *not very strong reasoning*.

But more plainly, the Lord says, "*Come out from among them, and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty.*"

One only remark, I believe, remains in this part: your objection to ceasing to do evil before we know to do good—taking, as you call it, a leap in the dark. Is it taking a leap in the dark for a *Christian ceasing to do known evil*, because he does not yet know all the Lord's subsequent will concerning him? Are we to say, I will not act on what I do know, till you tell me all my course on

to glory? I have seen the Lord thus continually exercise His children, giving light enough to make a matter a thing of *plain Christian obedience*, and not show all the happy, and blessed, and full consequences, till faith acted on that. It is just a holy and excellent trial of faith. He says, in principle, I am the door. The mind may say, where to? The Lord answers, I am the door: and wherever the soul finds Christ or the will of Christ, if, walking in faith, it trusts that, and the blessing follows. It soon goes in and out, and finds pasture. You seem to forget the praise of Abraham's faith was, *He went out, not knowing whither he went*. It is better to trust God in doing His will, than the consequences which doing His will may produce, however blessed. Now surely it is of Christ and the will of Christ to cease from known evil. If you call this taking a leap in the dark, Christ's will—and surely it is *His will* to leave known evil—is *not darkness* to us, but *light*, for which our poor foolish souls are thankful. Nor shall he that followeth Him walk in darkness, though he may only know that in the very next footsteps Christ has gone before him. And if you would know our experience, sir, we have not found it darkness, but blessed light; we have found our own weakness, and the poverty and ruin of the professing Church; but we have found marvellous and abundant light in the Lord, though light affliction for a moment might accompany it.

As to the Corinthians, though the principle is unaffected by it, it is perfectly plain that *the worst among them* was a Christian, though a fallen one. The habits of the Establishment seem to



have confounded decency of morals and deportment with the *very faith* of the Church of GOD. As to the Philippians, that corruption and apostasy were then rapidly flowing in on the Church of God, is unquestionable. I do not see that these people were at Philippi, and therefore there is no consequence to be drawn from the passage. With regard to Jude (if you do not believe that we are wandering stars, reserved for the blackness of darkness for ever, ungodly men before ordained to this condemnation, turning the grace of God into lasciviousness), you are not—forgive the saying so—quite honest in quoting it. Do you believe this . . . . .

And just allow me to ask you also, why you state in the outset that I complain of the world's being in the Church, when you, in speaking of the seven Churches, give a reason why "our party" say the Establishment is no Church at all? All the character you give yourself of alternate tenderness and faithfulness, and our comparative enjoyment by selfishly quitting the family, I pass by; great comparative enjoyment indeed I believe we have had, not in selfishly pleasing ourselves. But the point is, *What is God's will?* One charge is, that you have called that the family which is *not the family at all*. And if you have lifted up your eyes and seen the plain of Jordan, that it was well watered everywhere, and then found yourselves in Sodom vexing your righteous souls, for such I admit there are, you have nothing to boast of in that sort of patience. *We prefer the place of Abraham*, and give it all up to you, trusting that the Lord will deliver you

too; but see no motive to follow your example, or to associate ourselves with that on which the Lord's judgment is coming—and coming on it you yourself, I bless God, do not deny that it is.

I have now, in reply to the earlier part of your letter, spoken of the great principle on which I rest *as an obedient servant of Christ, in not recognising the Establishment as the Church*. I must now—a much more disagreeable and painful task—refer to the plainer *facts* of the case, and some of your own *documents*, showing its working, and how it is mixed up with the canonical principles of the Establishment.

And if, in the whole *arrangements* of a system there be a constant violation of the laws of Christ and His will and righteousness in the Church, it becomes impossible for a righteous man to act in it or with it. This, I repeat, is a much more painful part of the subject. . . .

In the first place, then, *pastorships*, or what hold their place in the system, are *publicly bought and sold*, or at least the right to appoint them. At this moment the Corporation livings are on sale. I remember a town where *the next presentation to a living was sold* to enable the Corporation to build (or pay for) *a theatre!* I have one now with me copying this, for whom a living was bought as provision for him *as a younger son*, and he then of course to be brought up at a University for the ministry!

But the placards of auctioneers and the advertisements of newspapers are evidence that *the pastorships of the Church of England are bought and sold in the market like other property*; nay, if I am to believe Mr —, they are

consequently appointed *because* they are unfit (see his letters on the Church, in a note I think to page 104). Do you think this consistent with the order of "the Church of God?" You will tell me this is *an abuse*. Is it not sanctioned by the courts of law, by the ecclesiastical courts, by the institution of the bishops, so that the Church of England treats any one else but the person so holding it as an intruder and *schismatic*? It is the consequence of that organised connexion with the State which makes it the National Church—the Establishment.

There is another thing besides that; *some one has a legal secular right so to present*, giving secular advantages, and therefore temporarily cognisable as a right by the State. It is the *horrid price* you pay for your specific and formal character. I do not understand how, if all the spiritual and temporal authorities of the system treat as an intruder and a schismatic any one else than the person so appointed, the appointment can be called *an abuse*. If you say it is, comparing it with the Church of God as displayed in the Word, we are agreed indeed; but then it is in this abuse that the system and order of the Establishment are entirely, and fatally for its character as a Church, *at variance with what we find in the Word of God*.

But this is exactly what presses, and justly presses, on the consciences of the Lord's people, and compels them to disown her authority and her state. You may tell me that such or such instances are abuses; but I say that *it is just as abhorrent to the principles of the Church*

*of the living God to have a good man or a society buy up livings as to have an infidel do so.* Do you think an infidel ought to have the right to present any one to the pastorship of a place? Perhaps, indeed, by the system of the Establishment there may be no saint there, but by the system of the Establishment *it is perfectly competent for him to do so*: he may be seized of or purchase the advowson, and *the bishop must admit his right, and institute his nominee*, and treat all else as schismatics and intruders! You will say his nominee must be a clergyman—be it so; but by reason of the system of national advantage, the bishop is bound to ordain, if there be no legal reason to the contrary: and supposing the clergy to be all faultless, do you think it is the system of the Church of God *that an infidel should have the right of choosing the pastor of a place?* How would such a system have appeared at *Corinth* or *Ephesus*? Is it in *principle*—I do not talk of abuses—the system of "the Church of God?"

But it is the system of the Church of England. *Her system is a system of parochial geographical divisions to which certain legal rights, privileges, and emoluments are attached.* This is her boast as contrasted with what she calls dissent, by reason of which the appointment to these geographical divisions is vested as a right or privilege in some one or another, it matters not who. Now I say *this, let it be ever so well ordered, is not the system of the Church of God at all.* Mr — says this is a disgusting ingenuity of abuse. How is the legal authorised system of the Church

as such? I leave the hard words with him; I have only to say if this be the system, *it is not the system of "the Church of the living God."*

And now, sir, will you show me one document or formulary of the Church which says the patronage of livings and other benefices, or the sale of advowsons, is *an abuse, or disallowed by the Establishment?* If you can, I can only say, to gain the world's advantages you have reduced yourselves to an impotency of doing right, and that is no place for a Christian to remain in. Further, I have heard it asserted, as a matter of triumph by evangelical ministers, that there are probably near *three thousand evangelical ministers* now in England—that is, ministers who, they reckoned, held the gospel of Christ, and were Christian men. There are, I suppose, about *twelve thousand ministers* in England, more or less. Now what is the nature of the system which, under plea of providing instruction for all, and charging all not within her pale as schismatics, has, when her state was boasted of as remarkably improved and under blessing, provided that *three-fourths of the population should be taught contrary to the gospel* by the nine thousand *not evangelical* clergymen, and that whoever did, under the blessing of God's Holy Spirit, go and preach it, these should be denounced as *schismatics and intruders?*—that three-quarters of the pastors of "the Church of God," according to them (if not, avow you are not the Church of God, and cease to talk of schism and dissent), *should not be Christians at all.* These are things inexplicable as a state consistent with being the Church of God,

to one who has read the Word of God, and drawn his ideas therefrom, and not from habit or tradition.

Indeed, sir, there are little expressions habitual with ministers of the Establishment which show they are not conversant with the idea of ministering in the Church of God. I read, "our people," "our dear people," and hear, "my flock," and "why do you intrude on my flock?" Who made them your people or your flock? An apostle would not, nor the Spirit of God have called them so. He would have spoken of the *Lord's* people, and "the flock of God." How could a servant of Christ, ministering holily in whatever gift God had given him—an Apollos at Corinth, or Priscilla and Aquila at Ephesus, or anywhere else—have been intruders on the flock of Christ? *They were part of it wherever they were, and to serve in it as able and bound so to do. But all is altered with you.* You have not even—forgive the word—the ideas connected with it;—your speech betrays you. And why? because you are a minister (even if true) of such a parish in the Church of England—your flock perhaps not Christian, nor "the Church of God" at all—not a minister of the Church of God.

Again, sir, who appoints the *chief pastors* of the Church of England? In fact, the Prime Minister of the day, for any reason perhaps that suits his convenience. The fact is well known; *and facts, sir, are important to conscience.* The Church of God ought not to be trifled with by theories, while the sheep of Christ are actually "scattered."

It seems to me to be a very evil sign,

when the Spirit is grieved by the actual scattering and wrong done to Christ's sheep, to be told there is *such a document* which shows the theory of my system is quite right: these are abuses! The Spirit of Christ cares for the sheep of Christ, dear sir, and not for neglected scraps of paper. But I take the theory, for I wish to avoid resting at all on abuses. The king appoints them. If you tell me there is a *congé d'élire*, Mr — shall answer you in the note previously quoted, that the king does really appoint; for by the theory he nominates the person to be so elected. In Ireland they are appointed directly by the king's letters patent. What part of the system of "the Church of God" is this?

And let me here remark, that an appeal to Church of England documents is in many respects a very fallacious mode of judging, for the most material and distinctive characteristics of her system are not found there at all. *The work of ordering, governing, and directing the Church is entrusted to persons chosen by the head of the secular authority of the country; and here, again, the whole principle and theory of the Church of God is contravened and set aside, not by the abuses, but by the order of the Establishment.* How can I own them as bishops (supposing me a rigid Episcopalian) appointed by God, when I know they have not been [in theory so appointed?— that the whole is a mere secular affair? You tell me they must be clergymen, and be thirty years of age. Is every clergyman of thirty competent to be the chief director of the Church of God? Is that God's theory, or is He the endower with needful gifts for His own work?

One who believes, then, God to be the author and gatherer of His own Church, and the divine orderer of its government, can find neither the body nor the guidance or order of that Church in the system of the Establishment; and, as Mr — justly says, no reform remedies this, while the principle continues. *The effects shock the conscience; the principle is condemned by the spiritual mind taught by and formed on the Word of God.*

Supposing a child of God in a parish where the system of the Church of England has placed a minister who does not know the Gospel, but quite preaches the contrary; and in the communion of the Church there is no one who owns the gospel on which communion is founded: here are the effects which try the spirit. But the person is bound to abide and hear error taught and souls deceived, and to own as one body, and thereby help to deceive them, those who are entirely unconverted, because by the theory of the Church of England *he is Christ's minister and they are the Church.* If such a person does not, he is *schismatic and dissenter.* Supposing two or three in the same circumstances, and they cease to own them who *by their profession of doctrine* are not believers, as ministers and the Church, and they meet because Christ has said, "wherever two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them," they would be set down as wilful schismatics; *but according to the Word of God, they would be really the Church of God in that place, let them be ever so feeble, and have no minister at all—*despised perhaps by those who had thousands to fill their aisles, and the respectability of

ecclesiastical associations to clothe their forms, *but not of God.*

*The promise of the Lord outweighs to faith all these charms on the imagination*—these goodly stones and gifts; and how strong they are my own heart well knows. I speak not, then, of abuses; but will you say that it is *the theory of the Church of God* that the King should appoint the chief pastors or bishops of the Church of God by his letters patent; or whether it be *the system or principle of the Church of God, or compatible with it*, that the appointment of the pastors should be in Landlords, Corporations, Universities, the Crown, or *whoever may buy them*; and whether you are to be content with the scattering and grieving of Christ's sheep produced by such a system—a *system sought to be enforced by the secular arm, to the expulsion of thousands of devoted ministers*; and then what is called schism tolerated by Act of Parliament, because the social effects were mischievous—a system which contemplates not *the Church of God, but the population, and secularises the Church of God by forcing the population to be all one with it?*

And let me add this question: Can you, while I do not admit the propriety of staying a day in connexion *with such evil in a system*, by your own confession, *not the Church of God*,—can you give the smallest rational hope of the change of the principle and theory from which all the evil flows, that the king, nor the landlords, *shall not nominate the pastors, nor advowsons be sold? Can you say that such a system is the system of the Church of God, according to the Word of God?*

But I have said enough to show the principles on which, in conscience before God, I act, and *must disown it as standing before me as the Church of God*; and to dispel, I trust, however feeble my thought (and I admit it humbly and sorrowfully before God), *the prestige of a sort of hallowed obscurity, soon to merge, I am fully persuaded, in the darkness of Popery*, which, perhaps, by its claims and influence, may deliver the nominal Church from the iacubus which presses down the Establishment as it is, and satisfy the desires of the Puseyite school—men who, though I believe honest (for I know their views well), are as inconsistent as they are mischievous; for the secular bondage of the Church is a very Babylon in the mind of an honest theoretic successionist.

I would add a little word to them as well as to you, that it is all but perfectly certain that *the root of the English succession was an unconsecrated man*. I once pursued the point with a good deal of research, and thus by their system they will be easily thrown when it is pressed home, and they ripen a little into the necessary arms of undisguised Popery. Such is *the prospect* which your cherished Establishment is engendering for us—not willingly, I freely admit, in the minds of many of her members, *but helplessly, because she has tied herself to the car of the State, not to dependence upon GOD; and wherever its interested or careless wheels roll on, she must go, or cease to be the Establishment*. Her efforts, therefore, are to control the State, not to follow God, because she is bound and governed by it—not obedient in freedom and simplicity to Him. "*She is my*

sister, not my wife," acquired Abraham cattle and Egyptian riches in abundance!

I would now turn to the documents of the Establishment on the two main points connected with the subject I am upon—(1) *the constitution and membership* of the body, and (2) *the ordering of the ministry*. I have already referred to the Canons, with which the Rubrics concur, which require the attendance of the parishioners—"every parishioner"—at the Lord's Supper so often in the year, and treat as recusants and schismatics all absenting themselves or impugning any part of the system.

But there is a point which lies deeper than this, and gives not its relative but positive character to the system—those documents which describe its members, those within, not those without, the assumption of which was quite necessary to the other. Now these documents show that *the ecclesiastical system of the Establishment is founded on the efficacy of ordinances, not of faith*, and thus is enabled in theory to embrace the whole population, and treat them as Christians, without reference to faith at all; and that any operation of the Spirit of God in the heart, save as communicated by an ordinance, does not come within its scope of instruction, or introduction to full membership.

If I am told that it cannot judge but by fruits, be it so; but these do not either form any part of the question of membership; a member who is a notorious evil liver, is refused communion in theory, but that is all. First, as you are aware, the child is pronounced regenerate by the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it is attempted to say that this is a change

of state, not of personal condition. *This is an idle effort*. Were I told, according to the fathers, regenerate means baptized—though abuse of words produces much mischief, if it were merely meant to say that they are baptized, and thereby personally admitted into the pale of the visible Church—my present argument would not hold: baptized persons are certainly baptized!

But I say this is an idle effort. The congregations are to pray that God will grant to the child that thing which by nature he cannot have; that he may be baptized with the Holy Ghost—an expression itself full of confusion, but certainly something positive, and personally spiritual: again, that he may be sanctified with the Holy Ghost, that he, being delivered from God's wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's Church, and being steadfast in faith, &c.: again, Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and made an heir of everlasting salvation. The congregation are told that they have prayed God to release him of his sins, sanctify him with the Holy Ghost, and give him the kingdom of heaven and everlasting life; and Christ, they are told, has promised to grant them: and passing by other consistent expressions, after the rite, it is stated, the child is regenerate; and they pray he may lead the rest of his life accordingly, and then give hearty thanks that it has pleased the Father to regenerate the infant with the Holy Spirit, and to receive him for his own child by adoption. What other terms could you use for a saint quickened by God, and made actual partaker of divine life? The prayer is changed when

there has been previous private baptism into "that he being born again—Give that he may be;" and it is then stated that he is *by baptism regenerate*. In the former service the expression is used, that he may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration: again, confusion of thought as to an infant, but definite in the extent of what is attributed to baptism. The baptism of such as are of *riper* years seems to me to seal the confusion, but that is not the question now to occupy us.

In the Catechism the child is taught that he was made a member of Christ, a child of God, *and that by baptism*; and therein it was *promised he should believe*—the Scripture saying we are *children of God by faith*, not by ordinances! The child confesses he is bound to believe, and keep God's holy will and commandments, which he will, and thanks God he is in this state of salvation. Now here *faith in certain articles*, and keeping the commandments, are obligations on the child, he being (on the proxies undertaken for him) made a child of God by the *baptism itself already*, where he assented, too, unqualifiedly that he would *keep the commandments*. And the promise of faith, afterwards they are stated to be *bound to perform*. The Sacrament also, he is taught expressly, was the means by which *he received* the inward and spiritual grace (are not these words plain?) of a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness; and this, anomalous and inconsistent as it is, is clearly the doctrine of the framers of these services and *this system*; for the strict sense and definition of a sacrament is declared in the homilies to be, that the forgiveness of

sins is *annexed and tied to the visible sign*. It is there said that absolution is not a sacrament, because, though there is forgiveness of sins, there is no visible sign instituted by Christ: ordination is not, because though there is a visible sign, there is no forgiveness of sins; and that there are only properly two sacraments, because there are only two where the forgiveness of sins is annexed and tied to the visible sign.

Let me call to your memory that I am not adducing these statements to prove the faults of the Liturgy, *but the principle* on which the Establishment incorporates *the whole population into Christian membership, believing or unbelieving*, affirming them to be *regenerate by the ordinance*, and then making the belief of certain articles incumbent on them on another's promise.

Next, the child is to be brought to be confirmed so soon as it can say the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and is able to answer the Catechism set forth for that purpose. That Catechism sets forth and has taught him that he is a child of God by baptism already, and acknowledges he is *bound* to believe and to do as has been promised for him—articles which, though of course containing facts of Christianity, tell him nothing really of the way of a sinner's salvation at all, for even in the interpretation he is taught that all mankind are redeemed, and clearly they are not all saved; and he is made to rest on the promises which ruined Israel under Mount Sinai: "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do"—an undertaking which, because of its perfection, works death to the

sinner; and he is taught the Lord's Prayer.

I would remark, in passing, that the instruction as to what he learns in the articles of his belief is objectionable even as articles, because creation is ascribed to the Father only as His act; and then redemption to God the Son, as if He had no part in creation, but had only a distinct act of redemption as His. But this by the way. The instructions as to duty I have nothing to remark on, save that *the knowledge of the Father, as His child should know Him*, is nowhere found in the Catechism. In a word, what is properly Christian faith is found in it nowhere, though many topics of Christian truth are referred to.

The Sacraments I have already spoken of, save to note that it is stated that the promises of God are made to them in the sacraments, and whatever articles may be given credence to, *promises IN A SACRAMENT* are the only personal resting-place which is proposed to the child: he is to believe in promises made in that sacrament. This preparation being made, he is to be brought to the bishop. He having there asserted that he is bound to believe, and that he will keep the commandment, it is repeated that they had been regenerated with the Holy Ghost, and been given the forgiveness of all their sins; and thus *after confirmation* they are introduced to the Communion, being now in full membership (and why not, if they are regenerate of the Holy Ghost?) and now confirmed! And all her members are called upon by the Establishment as Christians, as Mr ——— justly agrees, to partake of the Lord's Supper. The very people to whom the

same person would preach, *as sinners*, I believe very faithfully, to repent and turn to God, and to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, that they might be saved!

Thus we have evidence how the *population — the parishioners — are fictitiously made the Church*; and while individuals may preach the Gospel, *the body rests on a system of ordinances which makes the whole body, the whole population, by a fiction persevered in to their burial, a body of regenerate Christians.*

If these services be compared with the system of Popery, and the order of their administration, then not a moment's hesitation can be entertained of what (though doubtless purged of many details) the meaning and principles of them are. Of the fact that the body of communicants are not really Christians, no question is or can honestly be maintained: but the principle of the Establishment being that all parishioners should come, and orderly provision by her previous services being made that they should, it becomes not wrong that they should be there, but their positive fault and sin that they are not: they are bound to come, *believers or not*; and thus *is the principle of the Church of God* (or the separate gathering of saints apart from the world) *laid prostrate altogether*. And Mr ——— presses it as *the first act of obedience*, should there have been previous disobedience all the week; and the rule of the Establishment *would apply to an infidel* who was not a notorious evil liver, and *the fiction be kept up by his presence being taken as profession*. This, then, is the principle of the Establishment as to the



body: the effect is to *scatter the saints of God*, grieve and gall their consciences, and then *reproach them with dissent and schism!*

I am now to refer to the documents, upon which I would only remark as to the former point that *all the daily services go on the same principle of all the parishioners being good Christian people*. It is vain to allege that a service is to be made, and must be for Christian people. The fact of the Establishment is, that *they have made the Christian people for the service*, which is a matter generally left out of sight in their plea for this. Who warranted them in doing this? or what does such a making amount to? A reference to the homilies and canons will abundantly confirm the statement that this is the principle of the Establishment.

But to apply myself to the documents *as to the ministry*, we have seen, as I said, the facts (these are notorious) that the Crown and secular persons and bodies present to livings and bishoprics, and that young men are brought up to them *as to a lucrative profession*, and that they are bought for that purpose. And you cannot show a single document by which these things can be shown to be an abuse: they are *strictly legal by the system of the Establishment*. But the two documents I shall refer to are the twenty-third and twenty-sixth articles, which give the authorised form to the ecclesiastical part of it. The first states that we ought to judge those lawfully called and sent which be *chosen and called by men*. Do I quote this wrongly? Here then we get a principle formally laid down which makes *men* the

choosers and callers to this work. They have authority given to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard. Now I see the Lord directing the apostles to pray *the Lord* of the harvest to send labourers into His harvest, and it was the householder who hired the labourers into the vineyard. It is further stated, that it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office without it. Provision is made for the consequence of this human calling in the twenty-sixth, Sometimes evil men have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments; and though it may be right to see to this, yet if it be not seen to, they minister by Christ's commission and authority, and are to be attended to even in hearing the Word of God, though perhaps what they preach is *contrary to all God's truth*: and thus, to maintain the authority of the system, and the validity of ordinances where there is no grace, as far as man goes, souls are jeopardied, and the people subjected to all manner of false teaching *as of Christ's commission*. Do you believe that Christ has really sent a man to preach who is not a Christian, and does not preach the Gospel at all? If not, what is the meaning of Christ's commission? and why this care to maintain the authority of those called and sent by man, even when they are *evil*, but to maintain the validity of a system of ordinances which rests on man, where there is confessedly not the grace of Christ?

I may be referred to the Ordination Service, where the person says he is called by the Holy Spirit. Be it so: but there are articles, on the one hand, to hinder any one from acting on that,

unless he has man's sanction and authority for doing it; and, on the other, if it be quite false, and the man a pretender, or careless, or a hypocrite, *there are articles to maintain his authority, as of equal validity by Christ's commission, as if he really were*; otherwise it would be clearly impossible to regard him as *the minister of the parish, which by law they must*, and treat those as dissenters and schismatics who have been perhaps called by the Holy Ghost, but have not submitted to avow their receiving the Holy Ghost from a bishop, whom the king or his minister has appointed.

Do you believe every bishop the king appoints has power to confer the Holy Ghost? If not, surely it is an awful thing to pretend to receive it at his hands.

We are told, first, the bishops are securities against any not really ministers intruding, and that we are liable to this evil; and then, where the fact is notorious that the vast body are not ministers, and are absolutely opposed to the Gospel, are not called by the Holy Ghost, but enter it *as a profession*, we are told that, they having avowed they are led by the Holy Ghost, through their own hypocrisy and fault, the Church has done all she can. Well, then, the plea of this security is folly—save, observe, *to authenticate as ministers; and the only lawful ministers of the place, those who are not ministers at all. This is all it does.* The call of the Holy Ghost does in itself necessarily remain in the bosom of him who asserts it, but by his ordination the man is authenticated before the truth of his calling by the Holy Ghost is proved.

I have now, I believe, dear sir, gone through what the documents of the Establishment present, and her legal authorised proceedings, which do not appear upon the face of her documents, but which are just her form and constitution as an Establishment, in order to judge as to my continuance within her pale as recognising her as the Church of God. If you avow she is not the Church of God, then I feel no claim upon my soul on her part at all; but your assertion of schism or dissent in not being of her, *assumes a very important character indeed, because it pretends that she is.* The framers of her canons and constitutions, who took, if unfounded, very clear and decided ground as to this, were well aware of this, and therefore honestly denounced and excommunicated all who questioned or impugned it. And this is the point you must meet, *if you mean to hold the consciences of God's children.* That party feeling, early habits, and natural associations, and in many cases personal attachment, may hold a multitude within her pale, I do not question.

I do not think you can charge my letter with aspersions, nor with evading the discussion. The ground I have taken is clear and distinct, on which my mind rests, not without sorrow—I should grieve if it did—but in perfect, joyful, thankful peace of conscience as to the position in which divine mercy and grace have placed me, and a clear though very sorrowful judgment as to the point at issue. Save as to the responsibility which every false assumption casts on the party making it, I cannot own it as "*The Church,*" or a Church at all, but as a system by which the saints of God

have been and are (not *gathered* but) *scattered*, and which I firmly believe is *the channel of the country into Popery*, by the importance it gives to ordinances, and the sanction of that which is in word and not in power, and the hindering the *corporate manifestation of the children of God*, and their fully following the Light. The providence of God in this, and the judgment which it will close in, though matter of undoubting certainty to my mind, confirming my faith, and, where occasion is given, matter of mine and others' testimony, is not directly the ground of conscience, and to that in direct argument I have here confined myself.

As to selfishness and pride, and the like, as being merely a question of motives, I feel it not to the point to argue them. As to your appeals to our brotherly love to remove the degeneracy of the Church of England, my answer is, I cannot spend my strength on correcting what is *in principle wrong*; it is lost labour. It is not degeneracy: it is the system and principle of it as to its *incorporation, government, and principle of ministry* (though individuals may be good men and Christians who minister), which I believe *contrary to the mind, word, and will of God*. This was not the case with Israel—the principle and system were God's own there: not the case with Sardis and Thyatira—the principle and system were God's own there too: and therefore degeneracy claimed service, and not departure; for it would have been departure from the principles of God's gathering and assembly in the two dispensations. By being of the Establishment, I feel I should be

*in a state of departure from the principles of God's gathering*, not by being out of it. *Nothing, I think, can be clearer than this distinction.*

When you talk of the Establishment being a company whose title to the Christian character is almost defaced save to the eye of charity, I can hardly think you serious! Do not you, do not all real ministers of Christ, acting in charity, preach to the mass of them as unconverted and unbelievers? Do you think them uncharitable? I do not. But when you state that the shining graces of individuals are obscured by this company, but that they attract notice when they come out and stand apart in a little body, you just state the grand excellency of doing so; and God's principle of dealing with a poor, ruined, sin-darkened world. God does not light a candle to put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick: "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." *The method and principle you accuse us of following, then, are God's own, with this precise object.* The ascribing of motives to us in acting on it I leave in your own hands.

As to staying in *the hospital*, it sounds fair, but our objection, dear sir, is to staying *in the tombs*. You are preaching to them, at least the great mass of them, as dead in sins. Are you not? Certainly in charity and truth you ought to be. Well, we agree with you as to the mass that are in the great broad road; only we do not then come down and join them as *brethren actually in the road to*

*glory*; bound to avow that they are heirs of it, in partaking of that one loaf at least three times a year, and assuring them that they are children of God, members of Christ, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven. An hospital is for a people that are alive. Is it not? Do you believe that the mass of the Establishment are alive to God? In fact, your statement about the hospital is merely playing on our feelings.

We have acted on the principle of this word, "Whereto ye have already attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us mind the same thing." "If in any thing ye be *otherwise-minded*, God shall reveal this also unto you." We have found most happy peace and flow of charity in it; we do not pretend to have attained perfect light in all that God reveals.

Next, sir, you should have been surely more guarded on reading the 17th chapter of John's Gospel, in talking of "*the popular idol, unity*." I think, sir, deference to the Word of God should have made you attach more importance to it. That the world is imitating it by *latitudinarianism* I know; such is Satan's guile often, and I am not now denying its existence (for I fully believe it); but the allusion is rather an unfortunate one. I believe *the narrow sectarianism* of the Church as to rules of forms, and its *extreme latitudinarianism*, in introducing by these forms of unconverted, careless persons—careless unbelievers—within its pale, has given occasion to the existence of this latitudinarianism, and a plea for those who have the worst spirit of it to attack that of which the Establishment bears the name as more conscientious than it.

Do you think, sir, an infidel cannot act on the minds of men in charging bigotry where godly men are excluded from Christ's Church for the shape or form of clothes—clean contrary to the apostolic rule—and that a handle is not given such to ridicule the picture of holy pastorship when the sale of their appointments, and the education for them as one of the professions, are notorious facts, however the advocates of the Establishment may excuse or colour them?

It is an awful time, and, I would impress upon you, *a time near judgment, when the conscience or moral judgment of infidels is in advance of the practice of that which carries the name of religion as the Establishment*. Such is its effect; and thus while it feels the effect of latitudinarianism as inconvenient, it strengthens its hand by the position and character which it holds before them. It is this want of godliness and heavenly character in the Church which has given the world the occasion to legislate for it. Persecution there might be, but *not legislation*, for a body which *only sought heaven* and renounced the world really. You may charge us, as they did Jeremiah, with weakening the hands of all the men of war in the city, but, by the help of the Lord, we would not cease from our testimony, nor join the Edomites, but be alike strangers to what you call *your Zion*, and keep aloof from all that at bottom hate it; not because it is corrupted but because it is *nominally* the house of God.

But having thus far replied to the charge of latitudinarianism, your statements, as to the possibility of going be-

yond the foundation in teaching, have to be noticed. And here it is remarkable how habits contrary to Scripture obscure the judgment; and while we are judged as if setting aside ministry, the real value of ministry is lost in the mind of one who rests on Establishment and creeds. The truth is, sir, Establishment—that is, men's support and a creed—has taken the place in your mind of the Holy Ghost and of truth. One would suppose that the person who made the remarks you do, did not really believe that there was any Holy Ghost really to guide, animate, control, order, and provide ministry in the Church; no Saviour to nourish and cherish it as His own flesh. This is our dependence (however feeble and faltering our dependence may be), that He will guide us into all truth—truth treasured up in the Word of God, but into which we have daily to be guided, and all of which is before us in the Word. You might say of yourselves, who have a limited standard of truth which you subscribe, "Where our creed ends, error begins." But we have no limit to our creed, but the whole wisdom of the Bible; unless our own want of spirituality, which must ever hinder. We are open to receive and thirst for all truth. If you say, What is to keep you from error? we should watch against it on the very same principle that an apostle did (I do not say with the same power), but we can lean only on God to keep us from it; and we trust He will, and are sure He will, while we humbly wait on Him. You have, on the contrary, trusted a creed—so have the foreign ecclesiastical bodies; and what is the consequence? Error,

justification by works, and neology—here in three-fourths of the pulpits of the country, abroad in eight-tenths. Creeds cannot give living truth to the soul, nor can they secure truth beyond the compiler of them, even in form. You have kept a measure of truth in a book, but nothing more: your body has fallen into errors ruinous to souls, just as much as even those you declaim against; and remember that even Neology and Socinianism prevailed more where creeds were than where they were not. I have not found the advocates of liturgies and creeds quite honest on this point; and if they boast of this country and the wisdom of its Churchmen (not the continuing grace of God), the answer is, It was dark as others; and it was grace, not creeds, which revived the Lord's work, and that not quite within the regulations and limits of the Church, I think you must admit.

But as regards ourselves, if you cannot distinguish between the unity of GOD'S saints on one foundation, and that, if you please, as you rather slightly say, in the blood—yes, the precious blood of Christ—and latitudinarianism; if your system of uniformity without unity have reduced you to this state of mind, I can only sorrow for it. If you call the unity of God's children "a popular idol," we are sorry you are in such a state of mind; with us it is a cherished, deeply cherished object, because, in heart and principle at least, we are led by Him "who gave Himself not for that (His own) nation only, but that He might gather together in one the children of God which were scattered abroad:" and that the Holy Ghost leads

us to seek to keep the unity of the *Spirit* in the bond of peace, in that "*by one Spirit we are all baptized into one body*"—all one body, as partakers of that one loaf; and the prayer of Jesus has sounded in our ear a voice that subdues our thoughts, "*that they all may be one, that the world may believe.*" We may fail in the object—we cannot be wrong in the desire. But that the unity of God's children (this alone we desire) is a popular idol, sounds to us like a stranger's voice, not that of the Good Shepherd, *and we flee from it.*

If you speak of confining ourselves to one truth, and teaching no more, this assertion must be meant for strangers. Have you found this to be the case? One truth, the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, I trust will ever hold *undisguised prominency*; but do you think those who have been much amongst us are less taught than those who have not been?—are less acquainted with scriptural truths? This is not a usual charge, whatever the value of knowledge may be; for I believe grace is far more important, though truth be most blessed; but our principle is this, sir: Whenever the first great truth of redemption—in a word, *whenever Christ has received a person, we would receive him.* That false brethren may creep in unawares is possible. If the Church be spiritual, they will soon be made apparent; but as our table is the Lord's, not ours, we receive all that the Lord has received, all who have fled as poor sinners for refuge to the hope set before them, and rest not in themselves, but in Christ, as their hope. We then afterwards teach as we are able, according to the grace,

and knowledge, and wisdom we have received—all the truth we have received at God's hands; and here it is that ministry comes in. *We do not make a creed, but Christ the ground and term of union*; but trusting to the help and ever-watchful and ready care of the Lord over us, and the true and real presence of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, seek and give all the instruction, exhortation, comfort, and when need arises rebuke in love, we are enabled. One may lay the foundation—and all that are on it we receive—and another build thereon; and they must take care how they build thereon.

You may say, But there will be false teachers. *So God has taught us* (2 Peter ii.); and all your plans will not prevent it; but the grace of God will overrule it, enable us to detect them by the Word, and turn it to good; and your plans only hinder your leaning on that which is effectual—a spirit of constant dependence. There will be *heresies*—there must needs be, says the Apostle—that they which are approved may be *made manifest*. In a word, sir, your plan is to take the Church of GOD *out of the field of faith and dependence*, and thereby lead it away from the constant and blessed energies of the Holy Ghost, and *make it lean on something else*. But the truth is, God is most gracious, and faithful, and blessed in His careful mercy, though you may not trust Him. He knows that we have but a little strength; and though He has graciously permitted that which may exercise and strengthen our faith, He has never suffered us to be tempted above that we are able, but rather set before us an

open door. The Lord keep us in the word of *His* patience, and men or Satan shall in vain seek to shut it.

We do then receive on the one great truth of Christ's salvation all that through divine grace believing it are converted to God. And we then, having ministry of truth, build them up according to what God has given us. That there is imperfection in the teaching I do not deny, for we are all imperfect. But I do not think, dear sir, if you are acquainted with, and your mind is based on Scripture, you can object on principle to this as unscriptural. I think you would find amongst us *the very opposite to latitudinarianism*—a strong desire, prayer for, and search after unity among the saints of God, and the careful and diligent teaching of the measure of truth we have received. And if you say no good thing can come out of Nazareth, we will count it only prejudice, and say, "*Come and see.*"

As to our banishing of error, we have abundant provision in the Word of God, if we have grace to do it; and on this we lean: without it clearly we can do nothing. You assert that the Scripture is *insufficient* for this, precisely on the same ground as the Roman Catholic does. We have no stealthy standard at all; we openly condemn every discovered error. We believe not in the infallibility of the clergy, and the insufficiency of Scripture, and the sufficiency of humanly composed creeds, which is your ground. You say, with the Roman Catholic, that a Socinian could appeal to the written word. Could he? Do you say he could?—But we believe in the sufficiency of the Scripture, and the grace, energy, and power of the Spirit—the Comforter, to keep

out error from the Church, so as to guide us in the truth.

This is a very grave question—I believe the question between us; yet I would not willingly *say* so; for I believe it to be *the question between apostasy and the special point of truth now*. But you have put yourself on this ground: *you deny either the sufficiency of Scripture, or the grace of the Spirit* to use it under the faithfulness of our blessed Head's love to the Church. On this, in all our weakness, we lean. You say, "If you say in the written word," well, the Socinian professes to find *his* there too. Did you never hear this from other mouths, arguing against Protestants on platforms, or clergymen elsewhere? I tremble,—nay, but it confirms my faith when I see arrows drawn from such a quiver.

You say, "Would you receive a Roman Catholic?" If a Roman Catholic really "extolled Jesus" as a Saviour, and His one sacrifice of Himself as the sole putting away of sin, *he would have ceased to hold the error and delusion* by which the enemy has misled some souls (who are still, I would trust, precious to Jesus), he would have *ceased to be a Roman Catholic* in the evil sense of the word, *and on these terms only could he be received*.

I repeat, then, we receive all that are on the foundation, and reject and put away all error by the Word of God, and the help of His ever blessed, ever living, and ever present Spirit. If you have *neutralised the Church's energies by mixing it with the world*, so as to be unable to do this, it is matter of sorrow surely, not of boast. *Justification by works is*

preached in the majority of pulpits to souls. You refer to a scrap of paper which the poor people have never read, so that *your provision against error is null*. Such preaching would not be borne for one time by one single person professing to be a minister amongst us; and to your suggestion, "God knows what mischief you may inflict upon them," my only answer is, "God knows what mischief you have inflicted upon them." The stranger's voice, sir, has been heard in hundreds of pulpits of the Establishment. Has it not? Well, *the sheep have fled from it*. Do you rebuke them? you may tell them to stay and hear it. *They dare not*, by virtue of their weakness and timidity. It is *not the Shepherd's voice*, their safety is *in flight*, not in pretended strength or *artificial reasonings*. *You have scattered the sheep by your system, and as yet your conscience is not awakened*. I have little hope that it will be, or rather the change is impossible.

Parliament is *your legislator*, not yourselves. . . . You rest in *tradition in some shape*, ancient or modern, it matters not. *I do not*: I rest under divine grace—my only hope for unworthy and helpless sinners—in *the perfect sufficiency of the Word, and the presence of the Spirit in the Church, according to the faithfulness of God*.

This, I believe, is a cardinal point for the Church of God now—this great and blessed truth being taken in connection with it, that the Holy Spirit is present with the Church, abiding for ever. Popery and the Establishment take *ecclesiastical succession and creeds*, and assert together that the Bible is *not an all-sufficient guide, leaving quite aside the*

*continual presence of the Holy Ghost*. Your argument is, that it is insufficient in practice for matters of faith, and to banish error—assuming, as I have surely title to do, the faithfulness of God by His Spirit. If you deny it, do so openly. I see no reference to it in your letter, or that on which your system rests. As to this, my answer, then, to this charge is, we admit of *no heterodoxy*, but *all Christians*. If you ask, How can you do this? I answer, *By the Word, and Spirit, and Grace of God*. Your system receives the *population*, and calls unity "*a popular idol*," and (Mr — being witness) is arranged so as to appoint pastors, *because they are unfit*. The fact he admits; and I have already asked you, is not the person so appointed recognised as the only *lawful* minister of the parish, and all else intruders? instituted *by the bishop* as such, recognised by the ecclesiastical courts as such, and by every authority (*except the Lord's*) in the country?

If you say the bishop cannot help it, I say, "*Just so, because it is the legal system, and not an abuse of it at all*."

I believe only one material point remains unnoticed still, on which indeed many preceding facts and statements bear, honouring the Holy Ghost, which introduces in your letter the question of ministry. The facts to which the system you advocate leads have been already noticed, and if you think the sale of advowsons, the giving of the appointment of the chief pastors or bishops into the hands of the Crown, honouring the Holy Ghost's rule in the Church, certainly there are many (such as the *Irish Christian Journal* describes as having morbid



consciences) who cannot. This, I say, which is the regular order of the Establishment, the constitution of it, is *not honouring the Holy Ghost*.

It is not merely there being the fact of an ordained ministry. I see nothing like an appointment of elders in an existing body of Christians, in the ordaining young men of twenty-three or twenty-four; in the nomination of a pastor, who has got an appointment from some lord of the manor, or his being made a priest, presbyter if you please, on the same appointment. You do not arrogate to yourselves, you say, the selection of your ministers, but you give them authority to exercise their gift, when they say they are called, and the bishop has ascertained by certain testimony they are of good morals, not heretics, and can answer in Latin. Now supposing this sufficient and right (both of which I entirely deny, and say that it is entirely unscriptural, and opposed to Scripture, but it would lead me into another large question), you do in the appointment of this person to some cure, *not by the Spirit*, but by a laudlord, preclude others from exercising their gift *there in the Church*, and thereby, as the appointment is *secular*, and you dishonour the Holy Ghost in that, so the direction of the Word of God, "*as every man hath received the gift, so minister the same*, as good stewards of the grace of God," is set aside. It is not, "*he that teacheth, let him wait on his teaching; he that exhorteth, on his exhortation.*" All gifts must be assumed to be in the secularly appointed minister, or the Church deprived of them. This is what I call *dishonouring the Holy Ghost*.

Again, when you speak of not select-

ing ministers, what is your system? You have divided the country into ten thousand parishes. Who has authorised you to say that the Holy Ghost would raise up *just ten thousand ministers* at all times to minister by His help and power in these parishes? Yet by your system you are bound to provide for them, and in order to the attainment of this, secular advantages are attached, and titles of nomination put into the hands of interested persons. *This I call dishonouring the Holy Ghost, "who distributes to every man severally as He will."*

It all hangs on the same great system, that *it is the world, and not the Church*. Suppose your ecclesiastical authorities sincere—though I do not admit their title at all—they are administering a system which sets quite aside the sovereign ministry of the Holy Ghost in distributing as *He will*. The ten thousand parishes are to be filled; men have a secular right to fill them or to sell their title! This is not waiting on, honouring, or owning the authority and only power of the Holy Ghost to bless and minister by vessels of His appointing and qualifying in the Church. And then, when thus filled, the Holy Ghost's title to raise up one to teach in one of them, or to exhort one of them (though, indeed, they are not Churches at all), is positively denied, such an one is disorderly and schismatic.

The Holy Ghost is *limited* by your system to the ten thousand clergy, and their curates perhaps, and *is assumed to provide them* for the nomination of the advowsons, and *none else*. I am not speaking this lightly, for I believe it is *a most horrible and crying dishonour done to the Holy Ghost*. If I were to

speak to the majority of your clergy of the "*Holy Ghost distributing to every man severally as He will,*" they would account me *an enthusiast and a fanatic*; or to the owners of advowsons, of His raising up elders and pastors of *His* selecting and appointment, they would treat me as *wild and dissenting*. Their affair was their *rights*, and they exercise them.

Where there are ten thousand offices specifically to fill, and an education to fill them provided as a qualification, it is *a profession, and not a ministry depending on the Holy Ghost, distributing as He will*. The statement that a man is moved to it comes in by a sort of by-way, and itself lumps all possible ministries, to the exclusion of all others, into one nominally a deacon's, and then an elder's—very excellent offices in their place, but neither of them really undertaken, or ought not to be, at that age; neither of them properly or necessarily ministries of the Word, though they may be united with them. But this may be called confusion, not dishonour to the Holy Ghost, and is only collaterally connected with the question.

But while I might turn to *abuses enough to drive almost an infidel from the professed Church in disgust*, were I to turn to the preparation for the ministry at the universities, I confine myself to the plain facts and arrangements of the system. These abuses indeed are its *genuine consequences, because it has been made a regular, settled, lucrative profession: it must be if the Church goes by a geographical division of the population, not the gathering of the saints*.

But the plain facts and arrangements of the system permit no one to preach

save those *called by man, and who have received authority from man* (Gal. i.); so that in the principle of it St Paul could not—for he asserts the contrary principle—provide livings for so many, say ten thousand ministers, whether the Holy Ghost has called them or not, and forbid any one else to exercise it, so much so that a bishop cannot ordain without a nomination, though the man would profess that he was called and moved by the Holy Ghost still. They are *educated for it*, without possibly knowing whether they will be so moved or not, being designed for the ministry or *for a living* by their parents as boys; and when placed there, their one gift, if they have any, must exclusively be exercised—a pastor with perhaps no saints, or a young evangelist with old Christians to feed, *and this regulated by secular appointment*.

There is not then the least reference to owning or following the Holy Ghost as *the source of authority, and various gifts* in the Church of God; and if he should act without this secular system, his work is treated as *disorderly*. I say, then, that the *Holy Ghost is not really honoured at all in this system*. To make a parcel of young men, educated for the purpose, come and say they are moved by the Holy Ghost, when it is *in nine cases out of ten secular and family arrangements which have induced it*, I do not think to be honouring the *Holy Ghost*; nor, if all really were, do I believe it would be honouring His authority, His paramount authority in the Church of God. *I challenge you to show me anything the least like the organisation of the Church of England in the*

*Scripture—a parochial arrangement of the population, justified by a set of written documents that they are Christians, which all are called on to use.*

How do you know we have not fasting and prayer when any special work may be on hand, or any brother to be commended to the Lord for any special service? Is it right to assume the truth of such charges?

God in His mercy has provided us with many who have been a comfort to our souls, and spread, I trust, much truth by them. We find still the harvest plenty, and the labourers few, and therefore earnestly pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth labourers into His harvest. Whatever He gives we shall receive thankfully, and if any special work arises to which they may be called, be ready, I trust, to recommend them to the grace of God for it.

The way you speak of authority hindering the Spirit shows you understand our principles in nothing. True authority is by the Spirit just as much as any other gift, and, instead of hindering, is *one service of it*. That the Church is in the same order and energy as to this as in apostolic days, we do not pretend as you do; though the majority of your authorities, from the nature of their appointment (which Mr — says is by an iniquity of abuses truly disgusting), are not from the Spirit at all, and generally opposed to the truth. We believe the Church to have fallen and gone astray. Your condition is the plain evidence of it. We do not pretend to have competency to set it all right, but to act in righteousness, strengthening those things that remain ready to perish,

and to walk in love, which is the bond of perfectness. We do not say we can restore the Shechinah, or the Urim and Thummim, or the ark of the Covenant; but we will do all we can that the Word of God authorises and enables us, by the Holy Ghost, ever yet with the Church, to do. You pretend to all these things, but we say they are false; and that is worse than nothing—a wretched picture which the spiritual eye detects as not even like the scriptural originals.

I believe I have answered all the questions, charges, and observations in your letter. If I have not tired you, I certainly have myself, but I could not answer your questions and charges lightly, and a short question perhaps involved the investigation of important principles; but I have endeavoured to confine myself to what was properly an answer to your statements, and not diverge into others, though perhaps important topics. Though you have in nowise followed your proposed plan of certain questions which I was to answer, I have fairly, I trust, gone into all which your paper suggests, not as a mere arguer, but on the substantial grounds of the merits of the question, for it is not a mere question between *us*. The enemies of the Establishment might be displeased with me that I have not run through its abuses; and I have not wished to do so. *It is hard to be occupied with dirt, and not get dirty.* I am persuaded we have not much business with evil, save in direct spiritual denunciation of it when actually before us, or warning against it. *I have dealt with the principles of the system, which, I believe, deprives it of the*

title to present itself to the consciences as *the* or *a* Church of God, and make it guilty of much dishonour done to His name.

I am not conscious of having used an ungracious or harsh expression, nor even ascribed motives to any. I believe there are many saints within its pale. You will not have any aspersions to answer, unless stating *acknowledged facts* are such. You will hardly accuse me of evading discussion, though I have endeavoured to confine myself (under the Lord's guidance) to what I proposed—answering your questions. At any rate, I have stated the ground on which my mind actually rests, as regards the particular points you have referred to. That the gross and palpable consequences met with in everyday life act on the conscience, I admit, and so in the Lord's mercy it will be with multitudes unable to trace the principles.

But any poor saint conversant in Scripture is soon convinced by *practical comparison that the Church of England is not the Church of God, by what he meets every day in his own parish*; and it requires an uncommon deal of *theology and tradition* to show how it is the Church, and many a chain put upon plain conscience. as when I go to the parish church on what is called Sacrament Sunday, or Easter, and am told I am bound to own all I find there as Christians, *when I know well all the other days of the year they make no pretence to it*; and am perhaps plainly told by my minister, if he knows the

truth, all the other days in the year that they are not, and the difference pressed upon me.

However you have the *principles and system* here, not even its *consequences*. And I ask you, *does the Establishment contemplate having all the population within her ordinances, or distinctly gathering together in one the children of God which are scattered abroad?* The latter I would desire and seek; preaching to all.

In whose hands is the appointment of the pastors of the Establishment as instituted and recognised by the bishops themselves? If the Holy Ghost be He who gives and orders the gift of pastorate, and their exercise, on what authority do you divide the country, without reference to the actual presence of living faith, into ten thousand and some one hundred portions, and assign a pastor to each, to the exclusion of all other spiritual gifts?

Do you *de facto* acknowledge the mass of members of the Establishment as *really Christians*? Ought there to be any *body* to whom it could be said that they should "love one another with a pure heart fervently, seeing they had obeyed the truth through the Spirit, to the unfeigned love of the brethren?"

*Ought the saints of God to be gathered together in unity?* Or is the Establishment right in gathering saints and sinners, converted and unconverted into a worldly unity presided over by the Sovereign?







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