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**AID TO THE
IRISH CHURCH SUSTENTATION FUND.**

A REMOVABLE OBSTACLE

CONSIDERED IN

A LETTER

TO

THE VERY REV. THE DEAN OF KILMORE,

BY

LORD FARNHAM.

DUBLIN:
JOHN ROBERTSON & CO., 3 GRAFTON STREET.
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, & CO., LONDON.

1870.



A LETTER.

FARNHAM, CAVAN,

June 16th, 1870.

MY DEAR DEAN,

I am called again to write to you in answer to a second application to me from your parish, in connection with the re-organization of the Irish Church. Some months ago I earned from you a rather sharp reply of remonstrance and rebuke, by my declining to act as a parish delegate to the then approaching General Convention, and I am now invited to give in my name, as a member of the Irish Church, and thus qualify myself to be registered as a vestryman of your parish.

I have received similar applications from various districts of my estate; but, as the Rector of a parish containing a greater number of my Protestant tenants, as your parishioners, than could be reckoned by the Incumbent of any other of the many parishes with which my property is connected, and comprising a class of tenantry of which no landlord in Ireland would need be ashamed, I feel it reasonable to single you out as the most fitting person to whom to impart; and through whom to convey to others concerned, the course which the convictions of judgment, indeed the demands of conscience, constrain me to adopt in the matter in question.

My residence is contiguous to the parish of Cavan on the one side, and to yours of Kilmore on the other; and, on the same day I received a deputation from the former, and a

proposal of one from the latter, to urge on me the importance of foregoing my well-known objections to take any part in the proposed Church Organization, and, by so doing, as the landlord of so numerous a tenantry, to throw my influence into that scale which, it was asserted, contained what was essential to the conservation and dissemination of the truth of God in our land.

My reply, in both directions, was addressed to those who had, not many months before, read my published letter to the late Bishop of Kilmore, stating that, while my long cherished principles would, in any case, cause me to be an outsider to any organization aiming at the formation of a Church, such effort would, nevertheless, be met by me in a truly Catholic spirit, securing my practical sympathy, if, from the starting point, no uncertain sound of the trumpet were given to intimate, on the part of the reconstructed body, a *bonâ fide* intention to marshal the hosts of Irish Church Protestantism under the unfolded standard of a Liturgy, and ordinances, &c., freed from the presence of words, which, I have long been of opinion, only could be made to square with the rule of God's Word, when used in a *non-natural sense*, and with an explanation given to them, (surely not altogether to the satisfaction of enlightened Evangelical ministers in using them) to make it appear that such expressions did *not* import that which, in plain language, they broadly asserted.

On the occasions alluded to, I directed my friends in my two neighbouring parishes to a very late public delivery of sentiment, on the subject in hand, by the Archbishop of Dublin to his Clergy, which, even at that early period of the movement, left no doubt on my mind what his fully developed position would one day be, and prepared me to meet, without surprise, his constructive approval, if not direct endorsement, (so far as being not opposed to the teaching of the Church,) of the obnoxious little Manual, which, in the consternation it has produced among all orthodox Evangelicals, reminds one

of Gideon's cake of barley bread, which tumbled into the host of Midian with such convulsing effects.

When I remember the sentiments put forth, (not without endorsement from other Episcopal utterances,) in his Grace's previous declarations as to the sanctity of an intact Prayer Book, and the glory attachable to a Church by its maintenance of such an extended basis as would offer a foundation for the erection thereon of the most opposed schools of thought, in doctrine and practice—only admitting in my mind of the interpretation, that, in the loving embrace of a latitudinarian charity within the Irish Church, (as is, to a sad extent, the case with her still established sister in England,) superstition and philosophy might "meet together," and High and Broad Churchism "kiss each other," while orthodox Protestant Dissenters, it now seems, must be kept at arm's length,—when I say, I consider this, I am obliged to express my surprise, that so many of the present outspoken indignant protestors against the Archbishop did not, in their place, during the prolonged sittings of the Convention, spend some of the breath which was so lavishly expended in deprecating the perils of Episcopal ascendancy, in recording such a protest against announced Episcopal sentiments, as would have prevented the deliberations of their Body from issuing in what cannot be otherwise designated than as the complimentary reverential acceptance of the Irish Bench of Bishops, as worthy of investment with the so much dreaded Veto, and, as, in their estimation, qualified to bear rule over the reconstructed Church.

Want of sympathy may exist on the part of many of the occupants of that Bench with the Archbishop's mode of dealing with Mr. Maberly's remonstrance against Mr. Portal's Manual; some among them even may be inclined to echo the Christian and truly Protestant sentiments lately given forth by their honoured patriarchal brother in Waterford; but more than all this must exist and be manifested by them,

in their corporate capacity, ere the Church Body, which has formally accepted them with all their delegated power, as its spiritual rulers, can establish a claim for practical sympathy, in any shape or form, with it *as an organization*, by any one influenced by the convictions and feelings which I think it my solemn duty now openly to avow. Either at the coming Autumn Synod or sooner, something must be put forth, under the Episcopal sanction, to cope with and remove a mightier obstacle, at least out of my way, than the bearing of their second chief towards the Manual in question, which has not, in its contents, so much received the express sanction of his own individual judgment, as his *ex-cathedra imprimatur* on it, as not being contrary to the teaching of the Church.

If the Bench of Bishops, as handed over by disestablishment and disendowment to the enterprise of Irish Church Voluntarism, have, up to this moment, held their lips hermetically sealed, in the face of such a dogmatic assertion by his Grace, and of such a general agitation caused thereby, this at least has not been the case with the only member who, under the altered *régime*, has been, as the nominee of the Primate, enrolled among their number. My universally esteemed friend, the lately appointed Bishop of this diocese, has spoken out. His letter to the Rev. J. Gully, of Athlone, expresses his strong objections to newspaper extracts which he had seen from the Manual, and his yet stronger arraignment of the presumptuous clergyman who had put it forth. Such an act, without his Bishop's *imprimatur*, is, in unmeasured terms, condemned; but the Archbishop's *imprimatur* on Mr. Portal's heresies, as being not contrary to the Church's teaching, is passed over by him in silence; and, as long as the present reticence of the Bench which he has joined continues, we are left to gather, from the first appointed Bishop under the new state of things, what is likely to be the future attitude of that Bench towards the clamorous demands made for the revision of the Prayer

Book. Our Diocesan writes thus:—"I do not believe that any revision of our time-honoured standards could afford real security against Romanizing tendencies, whilst it might not improbably impair the Catholic character of our communion."

It is well known in this diocese what have been my antecedents of practical protest against some of these "time-honoured standards," and that, having excluded the Church Catechism from the schools on the property which, for many years, I have possessed in this county, I declined, on succeeding to the Farnham Estates, to respond to the request of the Secretary of the Diocesan Church Education Society to allow my many schools thereon to continue, as hitherto, on their roll, unless they dispensed, in my case, with their rule that the Church Catechism should form an integral part of the instruction given to Church children in their schools, assigning, at the same time, as my reason, my deeply-rooted objection to the teaching put forth in the Catechism on the subject of baptism.

It is, then, consistent that I occupy my now announced stand-off position, as regards the efforts of those who, in every direction, it seems, see their way to pour in of their means into the exchequer of a Church, while there is that in its doctrinal standards which is arraigned and condemned by them, as essentially opposed to "the Gospel of the grace of God." I cannot admit that any of these sincere, patriotic men are animated by a heart more loving or a spirit more catholic than my own; but together with a loving heart and a catholic spirit I must associate a clear conscience; and, as long as the Irish Church Body stands forth claiming from one to whom "the truth as it is in Jesus" has been made precious a response to its demand for pecuniary aid, without condescending to give any intimation of its solemnly pledged intention to recede from what I, with so many others, consider to be contrary to the teaching of God's Word, I, for one, having been forbidden by the protest of conscience to

embark as a delegate in the formation of its organization, or to act as a vestryman to carry out its purposes, cannot, without criminal disregard to that protest, and great inconsistency with myself in all my actings hitherto, consent to place any portion of my income in the hands of the general Body, or of a diocesan section thereof, or of selected trustees, to carry out its ecclesiastical purposes.

It is far from my desire or intention that this isolation of myself should lodge me in inaction, or exempt me from a proportionate share of the voluntary impost which earnest, self-sacrificing men are willing to undergo toward effecting what they regard as essential to the best interests of Ireland. I propose to take the best means to certify to myself the amount which, according to my available resources, I should have thought right to have added to the revenues of the Irish Church Body, had it been possible for me to have joined it. It shall be laid on my conscience, that the course which I am now compelled to pursue shall not leave me the richer, nor what I recognize as the true cause of God among us the poorer. It will be no matter of regret to me if the day soon comes when, hindrances indicated above being removed, I can, with satisfaction to my own mind, direct my steps out of the present necessarily eccentric, and the difficult path which they occupy, to tread the easier beaten one around me, at least as far as aid to the funds of the Irish Church is concerned. But, as long as the Episcopal Bench, or rather the Church Body acting under their rule and control, persevere in applying the principle of "the law of the Medes and Persians" to the actual *status quo* of the "time-honoured standards" alluded to, I must reserve the sum, to be ascertained as above, to be applied and appropriated, entirely under the control of my own judgment, apart altogether from the intervention of its machinery.

I would add some words in conclusion—words written in faithfulness, to be accepted, I trust, with forbearance, by

those for whom they are intended. My conviction is strong that God has a controversy with our country, by reason no less of its Protestantism than of its Popery. More hearts than my own, I am sure, have been grieved at the marked absence of the humbling recognition of the merited chastisement of God upon us, *as Protestants*, in those startling providences which have caused such confusion and perplexity, and spread such dismay through every district of our land.

As my eye has passed over the record of the prolonged proceedings of the late Convention, which were to issue in the formation of that which was, *par excellence*, to be the *Church* among us—as it has, from time to time, come in contact with an endless series of letters and reports of meetings in the public journals, rare, if indeed any, have been the exceptions where the strong indignant expression of outraged Protestant feeling has left opportunity (even if the inclination existed) in speaker or writer, to acknowledge, with shame and humiliation, the attitude in which baptized Protestantism, *en masse*, stands towards God's neglected message of redeeming love, and the aspect of indifferentism and worldliness which, alas! it too generally presents to His eye. Name after name, as I have read it at the commencement of a speech or at the end of a letter, has called forth, only to disappoint it, my expectation to take in something from lip or pen which would present before the public an expression of sentiment calculated both to justify God in His manifest solemn controversy with our land in His permitted invasion of so many cherished interests, and to award to Protestantism, whether regarded socially or ecclesiastically, its rightful position of confession and "confusion of face" before Him.

If such self-emptying antecedents, tending to glorify God and humble us, be not interwoven with the network of Church organization which it is now sought to throw over the length and breadth of Ireland, there may indeed be appropriated by the reconstructed Body, (as it complacently surveys its

consummated handiwork,) the boast of presumptuous Israel of old—"The temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are these!" (Jer. vii. 4); but it will have failed to apprehend its right attitude before God, and it must, therefore, needs fail to attain to that elevated position of blessing toward man, whence alone the risen Head of His Church can be expected to send forth an outgoing of divine influence, such as can meet the urgent exigencies of the "day of trouble and of rebuke and of blasphemy" in which we live. Reconstructing labourers will have "hewed them out cisterns;" but "the fountain of living waters" has been "forsaken," and the sad issue which we shall have to confront is—"broken cisterns which can hold no water!" (Jer. ii. 13). The salt will have lost its savour, and the solemn question may admit of no satisfying answer—"Wherewith shall it be salted?", and that awful added word not inappropriately demand the "hearing ear," as possible to be resolved into the future sad experience of the present great associated efforts of sincere and earnest men—"It is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot."

I may add, in order that I may not be mistaken in my ardent zeal for needful alteration in those "time-honoured standards," that no one can feel more strongly than myself that what the Protestantism of Ireland wants is something far more than entire conformity (whether among Churchmen or Dissenters) of the doctrinal standards of its several systems with anything that is presented in God's Word. Such conformity may, I am conscious, exist to perfection, and yet leave a fearful need behind, even the experience, in the heart, of that which, having saved, can sanctify, and produce a walk in life, which would "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things." (Tit. ii. 10.) Mere evangelical orthodoxy, I am fully aware, is a poor substitute for the life of God in the soul. Purge out all that the most fastidious evangelical taste

can object to in the Church's dogmatic teaching, and if this be the only issue of a movement to reform what has been defectively re-constructed, an amended edition of your organization (desirable as I have maintained such to be) will be no more than a *caput mortuum* among us. There is the danger that "truths, formally admitted, and retaining their place in some abstract summary of doctrine, may virtually be laid aside as of no practical value; things to be looked at, but not used; armour which we may hang upon our walls, but which we see no need to wear." The heaven-taught spiritual Christian, yearning for something far more than mere orthodoxy of creed, in the face of occurring circumstances, is, like Ezekiel, (chap. xxxvii.) "carried out in the Spirit of the Lord," and "set down" in the midst of the "valley full of bones." "Caused to pass round about them," in deep and intelligent consideration, he beholds them as "very many," and he sees them to be "very dry;" but a word to exclude despair, nay more, to encourage hope, meets him in that "open valley;" a question from God receives from God Himself its answer—"Can these bones live?" Yes, "sinews," "flesh," "skin" can be laid upon them, and "breath" made to animate the whole, and somewhat in our day can be resolved into actual experience, akin to what was once presented in vision respecting Israel's future. "They lived, and stood up upon their feet, an exceeding great army"—and (let it be observed) all this effected by the simple hearing of *the Word of the Lord*, by their being prophesied to, *as God had commanded*.

Let, then, all of man's teaching which is contrary to God's commanding, be cast to the moles and to the bats, and then something of the prophetic "shaking" may be looked for by us, to be followed by life and aggressive action, even the action of "the Church of the living God," made to be, (with its "loins girt about with Truth,") what, alas! it, at present, is not, "terrible as an army with banners," in its attitude

toward all that is opposed to "the Truth of God" and "the God of Truth."

"To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word"—whether by the formularies of a Protestant Church, or from the chair of bold, unblushing blasphemy at Rome—"it is because there is no light in them." (Isa. viii. 20.) While orthodoxy, then, should be discarded as our *ultimatum*, we should embrace it as a *means* to a mighty and blessed end, knowing that it is by "the Word of Truth" that souls are begotten to God, (James i. 18;) that it is the "Word of the Truth of the Gospel" which produces fruitfulness in the lives of those thus begotten. (Col. i, 5, 6.) The light of life is the light of Truth, and Jesus, who is the Life, and who is the Light, is, at the same time, the Truth itself.

"They are not valiant for the TRUTH upon the earth," was the rebuke of the Lord, through His prophet, to His ancient people. In maintaining my present (for many reasons) most painful position of testimony in the matter in question, and in explaining myself thus at length, my desire has been humbly to take my stand as one who seeks the honour of being valiant for that which he believes to be THE TRUTH.

I remain,

My dear Dean,

Yours very sincerely,



FARNHAM.

To the Very Rev. The Dean of Kilmore.

