

**"THE WRITINGS OF A MAN'S  
HAND", TO THE REFORMED  
BRITISH PARLIAMENT, IN  
DEFENCE OF THE UNION OF THE  
CHURCH AND STATE**

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"The Writings of a Man's Hand", to the Reformed British Parliament, in Defence of the Union of the Church and State by Charles Cator

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**CHARLES CATOR**

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*" Quicquid delirant reges, plectuntur Achiivi."*

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**BY THE REV. CHARLES CATOR, A.M.**

AUTHOR OF

**"THE CLAIM OF THE CHRISTIAN MINISTER TO ATTENTION FROM  
THE PEOPLE;"** PREACHED IN 1832.

ETC. ETC.

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1833.

351.

TO  
THE LORDS AND GENTLEMEN  
OF THE  
REFORMED BRITISH PARLIAMENT.

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FROM all that meets the eye, and the ear hears, upon the contemplated Reform of the Established Church of England and Ireland, to which your energies are to be at first directed, it were impossible not to feel anxious for the result, especially when it is announced that "a Church Reform Bill" is actually drawn up. It is worth some pains, considering the importance of the subject, to examine the fitness, or the unfitness, the qualifications and the disqualifications of those who are to give their judgement in the matter. If indeed the object of those most clamorous for what they call "the Reform of the Church", were only to repair the decayed places thereof; to reform those portions of it, which in the lapse of time can hardly have escaped the sorry privilege of every work, in which mankind must take a part; or to render it more efficient to its proper purpose, there might be little occasion for any friend to true religion to say more than, "God speed them well".

But the clamour raised against the Church, (and nothing is more easily excited,) by allegations, founded alike in ignorance and error, and, would that it might be omitted! in malicious falsehood also, has hurried away some of her lay members beyond the dictates of right judgement. For they not only advocate a change of their own contrivance, but they have gone far towards the usurpation of a power, not vested in them, to effect it. Of those without its pale, some, urged by the bitter spirit of hostility manifested in the leading portion of the mercenary press against her, like the enemies of ancient Israel, vociferate, "down with it, down with it even to the ground." There is besides a voice, within the tabernacle of Dissent, persuading such as imagine they have no interest in common with the Church, to press for the dissolution of its "unhallowed connexion with the State". And there are high in authority those, who already hail the imprecation, and abet its authors. Hence it becomes every man who regards the Christian religion, as the basis of internal peace, and national prosperity, to protest against the design; and as much as in him lies to counteract the measures whether contemplated or contrived not for "the Reformation", but for "the Extinction", of the Established National Church, its best preservative. And the ministers of the Church especially are bound to make an effort to

expose the fallacies, of which many are made the dupes, not more through the groundless assertions of aspiring enemies, than by the yielding disposition of professed admirers, and the tacit acquiescence of inactive friends.

The question to be discussed is not lightly to be taken in hand ; for it comprises the very gravest subject that can be brought under the consideration of man. It is a question in comparison with which, it may be safely averred, every other that can be submitted to the deliberation of the British Senate is as nothing. It is a question which involves the welfare (if their spiritual interests at all affect it)—shall it be said of millions of mankind? nay, may it not be said of all the civilized, as well as of the Heathen world, since they also have partaken of its influence? It is a question upon which man should most profoundly meditate ere he speaks, and in giving judgement, his voice may well tremble lest he infringe upon the sole prerogative of the Almighty God. For humanly speaking, it amounts to nothing short of this: whether there shall exist or not, a National Church of England?

And in this question, the following are yet involved—whether the Christian Religion shall count amongst its friends or enemies, its guardians and protectors, “the Powers that be”, by the permission of God, in England? Or whether, these



arrayed against it, or indifferent to its doctrine and its saving truths, promising to themselves security under the flimsy shelter of neutrality, shall continue to prosper, or even to exist without it?

There are some indeed in this our day of light and liberalism, who scoff at this idea, and ridicule the very notion of the dependence of the State's welfare upon its connexion with the Church which is in fact, upon its public profession of Christianity. Others taught, as they are, to esteem the "union of the Church and State" to be "one of the archest wiles which Satan ever invented", through which "Christendom hath been made to groan", and "the rest of the world hath remained unevangelized", will join with them in their denunciations of every one having the hardihood to put forth so stale an opinion, as a fool, a besotted bigot, or the advocate of corruption. Heedless of what they say in a question of such intense interest, and foreseeing the evils which an erroneous judgement in the matter cannot fail to bring upon the nation, this obloquy will be no more than the shadow of a passing cloud. Under this shadow may be surveyed the mixed community which hath sent forth the members who are to give the judgement; and which requires at your hands, this great and vital measure of Church "Extinction" or of Church Reform. For, if the late act of Parliamentary Reform, the infant of a two years' parturition, prove

not an abortion of rare deformity, it must be presumed that the opinions, prevalent in this community, will be represented in a somewhat fair proportion in the new Parliament.

In the glance to be taken, all due allowance, on the one hand, must be made for the known bias against the Church, prevailing in the minds of some, high in state-authority, whose influence may be presumed to have been exerted in favour of those candidates upon whose support they might depend\*. And on the other, some exception must be made on account of the apathy of such of the electors as rely upon the excellent constitution of the Church for its own support, without considering exertion necessary on their parts to defend it, by excluding from all share in the representation even its most bitter enemies, who are notwithstanding to legislate for it. Thus may be formed a tolerably accurate estimate of the sentiments and qualifications of those to whom the decision of this vital question is to be entrusted. These then,

\* The writer remembers to have heard a great Reformer, some years ago, declare his determination to advocate Reform, if he were in ministerial office, on a scale much more extensive than any then avowedly in contemplation, and this, upon the principle of commanding the largest majority, convinced, as he said, the government purse would always be the longest! Since this was written, Mr. Charles Boyton's letter to the Dublin Evening Mail, if correct, shows the anticipation to have been well founded, at least as to influence.

if they be like their constituents, may be classed under four distinct heads: Infidels, Dissenters, Lukewarm, and Conservative Members of the Church.

Of these it may be asserted generally, that the first impugn so much of the Divine Revelation of the will of God, as to subject them to the imputation of "having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof". And, excepting as they may expect their pockets to be relieved by spoliation of the Church revenues, however they may hate the ministers of the religion which reproves their unbelief, no reform can benefit them. Their votes may be anticipated.

Of the Dissenters, wavering between every wind of doctrine, and differing as they do, from each other's tenets, more widely than from the doctrine of the Church itself, under whose auspices they have been allowed to thrive, it may yet be expected that they will to a man join hands to weaken the establishment; although their courage, especially that of the more respectable of them, were the question fairly at issue, might fail them, ere they really consented to her total overthrow. They might be alarmed, lest the greatness of her fall, shaking the empire to its base, should involve them in one common ruin. Still as the self esteemed vicegerents of God's vengeance sent to "overturn, overturn, overturn", a favourite theme of theirs,