

**AN ADDRESS TO THE MOST REVEREND
FATHERS IN GOD THE ARCHBISHOPS
AND BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND, ON THE INTERNAL
DISCIPLINE OF THE CHURCH**

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An address to the most reverend fathers in god the archbishops and bishops of the Church of England, on the internal discipline of the church by A Low Churchman

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A LOW CHURCHMAN

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FATHERS IN GOD THE ARCHBISHOPS
AND BISHOPS OF THE CHURCH OF
ENGLAND, ON THE INTERNAL
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AN
ADDRESS
TO THE MOST REVEREND AND RIGHT REVEREND
FATHERS IN GOD,
THE ARCHBISHOPS AND BISHOPS
OF THE
CHURCH OF ENGLAND,
ON THE
INTERNAL DISCIPLINE
OF THE
CHURCH.

BY
A LOW CHURCHMAN.

• • • "and the dignitaries of the state may be observed in firmly-leagued opposition
with the dignitaries of religion against the warmest likings of the multitude."
Dr. Chalmers.

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AN ADDRESS,

ETC.

Most Reverend and Right Reverend Fathers,

IN this "day of trouble, and of rebuke, and of blasphemy," it devolves upon you in particular to "walk about Zion, and go round about her, and to tell the towers thereof, to mark well her bulwarks, to consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to the generation following"—and therefore it may be supposed that no suggestions offered for your consideration, if they have the slightest impress of right reason, will be met with contempt or indifference. I am, indeed, fearful lest every attempt to invade your Lordships' thoughts will find them pre-occupied by those loud, and in some respect senseless, clamours which are raised throughout the land about Church Temporalities; for so vociferous are the demands made upon your attention in this respect, from quarters not a little to be suspected, and often to be disregarded altogether, that your Lordships have been in danger of losing sight of the *real merits* of the question of a reform in the Church. The people of England are looking with the deepest, and on that

account the less noisy, anxiety for something of a reform which lies beneath the surface of a more equal distribution of Church property; they have no objections to let the prattling waters run over the deep and full-toned stream of their real feelings, because they have some hopes that the clamours of those who cannot enter into their religious views may nevertheless contribute to accomplish what they so much desire; and, my Lords, without going round about, I will tell you at once what they are anxiously waiting to see:—it is, whether all these commissions and discussion, and argument and nonsense, will ultimately tend to establish among them a “popular Christianity,” or not; whether they are still to be hopelessly saddled with that species of men and doctrine—that negative kind of Gospel, which has, for the last century and more, been so effectual in emptying our Churches, and erecting dissenting chapels; in short, whether they are likely to make any progress in ensuring for themselves and their children a supply of serious evangelical men in the Church, or they are to go on in the old frame-work of a rusty orthodoxy, where not a warm emotion is ever excited in the breast, or a glow of enthusiastic but generous feeling ever animates the countenance. To the question of the internal discipline of the Church, therefore, my Lords, I now venture to call your attention,—I, who am but a youth of a ruddy countenance, compared with the air of venerable wisdom which

“dove-like sits brooding” over your Right Reverend bench,—I, who neither have, nor ever had, nor perhaps ever shall have, one silver penny from Church emoluments; but, at the same time, who look on her prosperity and stability with as much anxiety as any one of your Lordships, on whom she has showered her visible favours. But think not, my Lords, that I write as a disappointed man—I am beyond the reach of church patronage. It can, however, be of no consequence to your Lordships *who* suggests, if the suggestions be found sound and practicable; and, as I write with only one motive, I will take all the precautions I can to bring your Lordships into that situation with regard to myself—where you shall hear a voice but see no man: by their own merit shall these observations stand or fall; they shall not have the weight of a name, although that name would not weigh more than the twentieth part of one poor scruple: and, in order that your Lordships may see at once the object of this address, and so save yourselves the trouble of reading it if you please, I will set down the five points to which I purpose confining my observations:—

1. The Election of Bishops, their office and legislative capacity, and how they should have coadjutors.
2. The Education and Fitness of the Clergy.

3. Patronage, and the manner in which it has all been thrown into one Theological scale.
4. The due administration of the Sacraments, especially with reference to Baptism.
5. Visiting Preachers desirable to be appointed in each Diocese.

§ 1.

Election of Bishops, &c.

The power of choosing a successor to a vacant diocese is vested in the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral. This was originally a provision made in the 25th of Henry VIII. c. 20, to check the interference of the Bishop of Rome, the spiritual authority being thus as it were transferred from the Pope to the Dean and Chapter: but the same act of parliament declares that if the electors choose any other person than the individual recommended to them by the King, or shall not confirm, invest, and consecrate, with all due circumstances, every person as shall be so elected, nominated, or presented within twenty days, then every Dean and particular person of the Chapter, &c. shall incur the dangers, and pains, and penalties, of the statutes of provision and praemunire made in the 25th of Edward III. and the 16th of Richard II. The statute to be enforced in such a case is as follows:—

“They, (the parties so offending) their notaries, procurators, counsellors, &c. shall be put out of the King’s protection, and their lands and tenements, goods and chattels, forfeit to our Lord the King, and that they be attached by their bodies and brought before the King and his Council,” &c. Now the case as it stands, since the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts in 1828, and the Roman Catholic Relief Bill in 1829, is this:—The offices of the Crown are thrown open to men of all religions, from the Roman Catholic to the avowed Socinian and the Deist; we will say, supposing them all to be sincere men, from Mr. O’Connell to Lords Holland and Lansdowne, and Mr. Joseph Hume. The Ministers, and not the King, appoint the Bishops: suppose, therefore, that a sincere and zealous Roman Catholic, or a Socinian, should be anxious to promote his peculiar views of religion, he sends to the Dean and Chapter his mandate to elect such a Bishop, and if they refuse they incur the penalties set forth in the acts of parliament above quoted. There can be no security for the Church, in such a state of things, except in the indifference of the Minister of State to any particular form of religion—a security which I for one by no means underrate; but yet the glaring inconsistency of the law as it stands calls loudly for a revisal at least; for your Lordships know well enough that there are even now upon your Right Reverend Bench more than one Bishop believed by a large portion of the Clergy to