

**A CHARGE DELIVERED TO THE
CLERGY OF THE DIOCESE OF
LONDON AT THE VISITATION
IN OCTOBER, MDCCCXLII**

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A Charge Delivered to the Clergy of the Diocese of London at the Visitation in october,
MDCCXLII by Charles James

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CHARLES JAMES

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C H A R G E

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THE CLERGY

OF

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IN OCTOBER, MDCCCXLII.

BY

CHARLES JAMES

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TO THE CLERGY
OF THE DIOCESE OF LONDON

THIS CHARGE

PRINTED AT THEIR REQUEST

IS INSCRIBED

WITH

SENTIMENTS OF THE TRUEST REGARD AND RESPECT

BY

THEIR FAITHFUL FRIEND AND BROTHER

C. J. LONDON.

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CHARGE.

REVEREND BRETHREN,

I HAVE looked forward to meeting you on the occasion of my fourth Visitation, with mingled feelings of pleasure and anxiety; of pleasure, as being permitted by the goodness of God to congratulate you upon the Church's increased and increasing energy, and usefulness, and power; of anxiety, as being sensible that I should be expected to speak, with the authority belonging to my office, upon the most important of the questions, respecting which the Clergy are at this time divided in opinion. These questions are, in fact, so much more urgent than any others which present themselves as suitable topics of an address upon this occasion, that I make no apology for entering upon them at once, without pausing to notice matters of inferior moment.

The questions, to which I allude, relate partly to the doctrines of our Church, and partly to its ritual. It will not be possible for me, in the compass of a Charge, to do more than touch, in a summary manner, upon the principal features of the controversy now carrying on amongst us; and I must therefore abstain, as far as the nature of the subjects will permit, from lengthened argument and discussion: but you have a right to know my opinions on these matters; and I shall proceed to state them as plainly and as briefly as I can. This is the first opportunity which I have had of doing so, in an official address to the Clergy, since the controversy assumed a definite and prominent shape; and I acknowledge that I was not unwilling to pause, and to be silent for a time, in the hope that those, who have been engaged in that controversy, would see the

evils which must ensue to the Church from its continuance, and be led to modify, or at least to keep within their own bosoms, what I considered to be extreme opinions. That hope has unhappily passed away ; and it now remains for me to perform the duty of pronouncing that deliberate judgment which the Clergy of my own diocese are entitled to look for. In so doing, it will be my endeavour, in humble reliance upon the guidance of the Holy Spirit, not to enter into a polemical discussion on the truth of the doctrines, or the propriety of the rites and ceremonies, which will come under consideration ; but to act as an interpreter of the Church's sense as to the one, and of her will as to the other. If these can be clearly ascertained, we can have no difficulty, looking to the relation in which we stand to her, as to *what* we are to teach, or *how* we are to minister : for we have all solemnly promised, at our ordination, to "give our faithful diligence always so to minister the doctrine, and sacraments, and the discipline of Christ, as the Lord hath commanded, and as this Church and realm hath received the same."

But before I enter upon these subjects, and as introductory to them, I think it right to offer a few remarks upon the most important of the questions concerning Church government and discipline, that which relates to the source and validity of our mission, and to the extent of our authority, as ambassadors of Christ, the interpreters of his Word, and the dispensers of his Sacraments. I have so recently made a public declaration of my opinions on the divine institution and authority of the Church, that I need not repeat them on the present occasion. If the view which I have taken of the subject be correct, it follows, as a necessary inference, that in this country the clergy of the national Church, and they alone, are entitled to the respect and obedience of the people, as their lawful guides and governors in spiritual things : that they alone are duly commissioned to preach the Word of God, and to minister his holy Sacraments. But the extent and boundaries of their ministerial authority are points, which admit of a considerable diversity of opinion, even amongst those who do not question its origin or legitimacy. If it be an error, leading to, and partaking of the nature of schism, to deny, or undervalue that authority, it is, on the

other hand, injurious to the cause of truth and unity to exaggerate it, and to stretch its prerogatives beyond that which has the sure warrant of God's Word. Those persons, who are driven, by the overstrained pretensions of the clergy, to question their authority, are almost sure to withhold from them the respect to which they are justly entitled, and to consider priesthood and priestcraft as convertible terms.

There is so obvious an analogy, in the general features of ecclesiastical polity, between the appointment and offices of the hierarchy under the Levitical law, and those of the Christian ministry, that it is no wonder if some persons have imagined, not merely an analogy, but a typical relation between them; the Jewish priesthood being the type, and the Christian ministry the antitype; the high-priest, the priests, and Levites of the one, answering to the bishops, priests, and deacons of the other; the latter inheriting the dignity, privileges, and duties of the former. The Church of Rome, on the other hand, teaches that our Saviour instituted a new and proper priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek. - Neither of these suppositions is consistent with the language of Holy Scripture. The priesthood of Melchizedek, and that of Aaron, were typical of that which was borne by Jesus Christ Himself, the great high priest of the world, who fulfilled, once for all, in his own person, every type and shadow of the older economy of God's Church, which bore any relation to propitiatory sacrifice, and to mediation between God and man.

It is apparent from the whole train of argument pursued in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that under the new dispensation Jesus Christ was to be the only sacrificing priest; his death the only proper sacrifice; Himself the only victim. All the offices, authority, and efficacy of the Jewish priesthood, as they pointed to Jesus Christ, and drew all their efficacy from *his* mediation, were finally centered and absorbed in *Him*, beside whom, and after whom, there is no victim, no sacrifice, no proper mediator between God and man. Whatsoever spiritual power, duties, or privileges, belong to the Christian ministry, are derived to it solely from Jesus Christ, as the Head of his Church, the founder of a new spiritual economy, wherein man, being