

**A LETTER TO THE BISHOP OF
EXETER; CONTAINING AN
EXAMINATION OF HIS LETTER TO
THE ARCHBISHOP OF
CANTERBURY**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649043439

A Letter to the Bishop of Exeter; Containing an Examination of His Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury by William Goode

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WILLIAM GOODE

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A LETTER

TO

THE BISHOP OF EXETER.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY C. F. HODGSON, 1, GOUGH SQUARE, FLEET STREET.

575 1000 2 13

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TO
THE BISHOP OF EXETER;

CONTAINING
AN EXAMINATION OF HIS LETTER

TO THE
Archbishop of Canterbury.

FROM
WILLIAM GOODE, M. A., F. S. A.

RECTOR OF ALLHALLOWS THE GREAT AND LESS, LONDON.

—
FOURTH EDITION.
—

LONDON:
J. HATCHARD AND SON, 187, PICCADILLY.

—
1850.

A LETTER,

8c. 8c.

MY LORD,—

You will not be surprised, that I should feel myself called upon to take some notice of your recent Letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The frequent references occurring in it to my statements on the controversy to which it relates, and the nature of the observations made upon them, are such as to require from me an answer. I must be permitted to add, that the attack which your Lordship has there made upon our common ecclesiastical Ruler and Primate (to say nothing of your censure of other and still higher authorities), would alone justify any of the faithful sons of our Church in placing before the public a calm review of your statements.

My Lord, in making this attack, you are conscious that you are assailing one whose position entirely prevents the possibility of his offering any reply, and to whose Christian forbearance alone you are indebted for being allowed to disturb the peace of the Church with impunity. Your Lordship, with characteristic ingenuity, has taken advantage of a phrase in his Grace's Preface to his new edition of his work on Apostolical Preaching, to represent him as having descended from his high position into the field of controversy, on a subject in which you are one of the parties. And, with your usual accuracy, you have stated, that, "in the whole history of the Church of England," you are "not aware that anything of a similar kind has ever before occurred." Have you never heard, then, my Lord, of Archbishop Cranmer's Answer to Bishop Gardiner? Are you really so little versed in the writings of our Reformers, that such a work as this comes not even within

the limits of your recollection? And, were your statement correct, could you have placed before the world a fact more self-condemnatory? If the unparalleled character of your proceedings had forced His Grace a step out of the usual course, I leave it to your Lordship's consideration, in what position it would have left your own cause.

But, my Lord, it is not so. His Grace has done no such thing; and time will show, whether he has any intention of so doing. The charge is, like too many of your Lordship's accusations, groundless, unjustifiable, and offensive. Your Lordship does not need to be informed, but the public may, that in the course of the recent controversy, and when it was known that His Grace would have to sit in judgment upon the Cause then *sub judice*, certain parties, on your Lordship's side of the question, felt it to be consistent with Christian candour, to cull certain passages from his work on Apostolical Preaching (first published thirty-five years ago),—separating them from modifying passages, of 33 years standing, in the context,—and, in the face of these modifying passages, and also of distinct declarations made upon the subject in the course of the last few years, give them to the world as His Grace's sentiments upon the Cause then *sub judice* in the Church. My Lord, those who are defending the cause of truth can afford to leave such practices to the fate which, sooner or later, inevitably awaits them, and therefore your supporters were permitted to enjoy undisturbed all the aid which such a system of defence could afford them. They were left unnoticed; and if anything was wanting to show their true character, it has been supplied by the quotations now put forward by your Lordship's own hands, as proving that His Grace's sentiments were entirely opposed to what they were thus represented to be. My Lord, under these circumstances, was there any cause for surprise, was there any just ground for charging His Grace with descending into the field of "controversy," when in the Preface to a new edition of his work, published after the Judgment had been delivered, he pointed attention, in an *uncontroversial way*, to the fact that there were various passages in the very work which had been so misused, bearing out the Sentence to which he had just

given his public sanction. Most justly did he "call attention to what" he had "written concerning the grace of baptism." And he added, that his mind was confirmed in the correctness of such a view of the matter by other arguments and testimonies which he there adduces. And I believe, that, with the exception of a small and turbulent faction, the Church will thankfully accept such an exposition of His Grace's views, without dreaming of his having "descended" (as your Lordship justly expresses it) into the field of "controversy" with you on the subject.

My Lord, I need scarcely observe, that in the remarks I am about to make on your Letter, I speak merely as an individual. I alone am responsible for the statements here made. And my remarks are made on a copy of your Lordship's Letter, bearing on the cover the impress of the "*fourth* edition," delivered at my house before three o'clock on *the same day on which it was first published*. I call your Lordship's attention to this fact, in order that you may give such directions on the subject as you think fit to your respectable publisher, who does not usually, I believe, adopt such practices.

My Lord, the first five-and-twenty pages of your Letter are spent in the attempt to prove, that his Grace's sentiments have recently undergone a great change on the subject of the effects of Baptism. And you intimate at its conclusion, that though you have been his Grace's "affectionate friend for nearly thirty years," such change has compelled you to become "now" only his "afflicted servant." My Lord, if your charge were true, would there be any cause for wonder or reproach, if, in his later years, His Grace had thought good somewhat to modify the statements made by him in a work published more than thirty years ago? Would it justify a *virulent attack* upon one under whose authority you are placed, and to whom you have solemnly pledged yourself that you will pay all "due reverence and obedience?" What would have been your Lordship's feelings, if a presbyter of your diocese had adopted the same course towards yourself, with respect to certain works published within a very short period of time from one another? But your Lordship may perhaps say, that you claim ample scope for

change, "excepting only one single subject, the fundamental articles of the Creed." "The efficacy of baptism," you add, "is such an article." And is it really a "fundamental article" of the Christian creed, that every infant is necessarily a partaker of spiritual regeneration in and by baptism? Where is your Lordship's authority for such a statement, either in Holy Scripture or in the ancient Creeds of the Church? I am quite aware of the citations made from both sources by heated controversialists, who find their own preconceived notions in every passage that relates to the subject, but I challenge your Lordship to produce a single passage from either that will bear you out in this assertion. Is it really a desertion of a fundamental article of faith, to admit, that all the effects which were at one time supposed to attend the administration of infant Baptism do not invariably and necessarily attend it?

Permit me, my Lord, to remark, that fundamental articles of faith are not to be created by the *dictum* of any man, or body of men. They must rest, as the Creeds themselves are made by our Church to rest, on "most sure warrants of Holy Scripture." And such sure warrants, or any warrant, for the invariable spiritual regeneration of all infants in and by Baptism, your Lordship will certainly look for in vain.

But, my Lord, the truth is, that you have, unconsciously, most incontrovertibly established the fact, (as I shall immediately show) that, *according to your own view of the matter*, there has been, for even more than this period of "affectionate friendship," *no change at all*. You tell us, that the "additions and omissions" made in the 9th edition, just published, of his Grace's work on "Apostolical preaching," make its "tone" on the subject of Baptism "very different from that which it exhibited" in the original work published in 1815. And you courteously remark, that while his Grace, in his Preface, "speaks of it as if it were still substantially the same," it will be your "painful duty to remark on some most important changes," &c. And your accusation is, that this change is *recent*. You regret that "now," in his "advanced years and exalted station," he should "almost contradict the sounder teaching of his earlier years." (p. 5.) Now, my Lord, would