

BISHOP GORE AND THE CATHOLIC CLAIMS

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Bishop Gore and the Catholic Claims by John Chapman

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JOHN CHAPMAN

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Chap. 1
1874

NIHIL OBSTAT.

LAMBERTUS NOLLE, O.S.B.
Censor Deputatus.

IMPRIMATUR.

GULIELMUS PRAEPOSITUS JOHNSON,
Vicarius Generalis.

WESTMONASTERII,
die 22 Aprilis, 1905.

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AND THE
CATHOLIC CLAIMS

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BY
DOM JOHN CHAPMAN, O.S.B.

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PREFACE

SOME seventy years ago certain minds in the Established Church were earnestly intent on searching out a *via media* in religion, *i.e.* a middle ground between what was known as "Roman" doctrine and mere Protestantism. In this voyage of discovery the pioneer was the illustrious Newman. To this he for some years devoted his talents, his learning, and his best energies in the hope of finding security for himself and others in the bosom of the Church in which he had been brought up, and which he still cherished as a mother. The result of it all was that he found he had to give up the task as hopeless, and he sought safety for his own soul by submitting to the Holy, Roman, and Catholic Church. His secession might well have proved the death-blow to all *via media* enterprise; yet since that day others have ventured upon it with hope that they might succeed where he failed. Of these not the least distinguished by his ability, learning, and religious earnestness is Dr. Gore, who has recently been enthroned as bishop of the newly-founded Anglican See of Birmingham. His book on Roman Catholic Claims appears to be in great demand. It is mainly an attack on the positions we hold. And there can be little doubt that many of the unwary who read it will regard it as conclusive against our claims, and not a few are being held back who would otherwise feel disposed to follow Newman into the Catholic Church. For the sake of these, and for the benefit of those who come to us in an inquiring frame of mind, the "Reply" of Dom Chapman, O.S.B., to the "Roman Catholic Claims" will be found most useful. Within the space of 124 pages it supplies

an answer to the leading questions which are raised in that book. I commend it, therefore, to the clergy and laity of my diocese as a sufficient statement and vindication of Catholic doctrine on the points it deals with. And I can assure the gifted and learned author that we shall all appreciate the scholarly way in which he has accomplished his task, and the kindly, courteous, and temperate tone he has maintained throughout.

✠ EDWARD,
BISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM.

OScott COLLEGE,
May 21st, 1905.

TO THE RIGHT REV. C. GORE, D.D.

My dear Lord Bishop,

Your appointment to the new Anglican see of Birmingham has been contemporaneous with the publication of a sixpenny edition of your book on "the Roman Catholic Claims." To many this popularising of an attack upon Catholicism at the moment of your assumption of a title which has been borne for half a century by a Catholic Bishop must necessarily appear to be a challenge.¹ I am quite sure that you had no such intention, and the tone of your sermon and speech on March 2nd, on the occasion of your enthronement, would alone suffice to show that you have not entered upon your new duties in a spirit of hostility to Catholics, or to anyone else, but just in that spirit of friendliness to all, which those who know you would have expected you to show.

Nevertheless your sixpenny book is a challenge, and it is unavoidable that someone on the Catholic side should pick up the glove which you have thrown down. I am glad to be the one to do so, although I dislike controversy, although I have much work in hand that I do not enjoy thrusting aside, although I have no confidence in my own competence for the work, because I know I can approach the task as one who has both affection and respect for yourself personally. I, at least, shall not assume that you have opened your mouth for the first time among us at Birmingham with an offensive proclamation of enmity, and others might reasonably have taken a different view. I am sorry if it should seem that I am welcoming you to Birmingham with disagreeable remarks; but I am writing a reply, not an attack. I am glad to have the opportunity of saying how much good I know you will wish to do, and how much of it will necessarily have the sympathy of Catholics. Because I necessarily complain of the negative views expressed in your attack on our religion, it is not to be supposed that I forget how much of the

¹ It is described on the cover as the work of the "Bishop-Designate of Birmingham," and "ninth edition" is not found outside. The above was written before your letter, denying that you had challenged anyone, appeared in the Birmingham papers of March 20th.