

**THE SUPREMACY QUESTION, OR JUSTICE TO
THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND: AN APPEL TO
BRITISH JUSTICE FOR THE REMOVAL OF THE
DIFFICULTIES WHICH AT PRESENT IMPEDE THE
PROPER EXERCISE OF
THE ROYAL SUPREMACY, AND THE
NECESSARY WORK OF CHURCH REFORM**

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The Supremacy Question, or Justice to the Church of England: An Appel to British Justice for the Removal of the Difficulties Which at Present Impede the Proper Exercise of the Royal Supremacy, and the Necessary Work of Church Reform by G. E. Biber

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BY THE
REV. G. E. BIBER, LL.D.

"Reges qui Ecclesiam tenent, rectissime ad eam
curam judicant pertinere."—*Duguet, c. Grad. l. i. c. 44.*

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TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
LORD JOHN RUSSELL, M.P., P.C.,

First Lord of the Treasury, &c. &c.

MY LORD,

As I have no private claim whatever upon your Lordship's notice, so neither can I be vain enough to make the similarity of subject between your own literary labours on the English constitution, and the present performance, a plea for inscribing the following pages to your Lordship.

And since I stand in need of an apology for venturing to do so, I must even make that which might seem to render my freedom the more unwarrantable, the ground of my justification,—I mean the exalted station which your Lordship occupies at the head of the government of this great empire. Nor yet that alone. The critical juncture at which your Lordship has resumed the reins of power, at the request rather than against the wishes of your political opponent, can hardly fail to have directed your Lordship's mind to a review of all the changes which have been effected of

late years in the British constitution, and of which few men living have a better right than you to say,

“ Quorum pars magna fui.”

Whatever sensations the remembrance of that fact may call up in your Lordship's mind, there can hardly fail to be mingled with them a measure of regret at the effect which those changes have had upon the Church of England, in making her position,—a position ill-defined and unfavourable to her efficiency, before those changes,—an essentially false and embarrassing position. To extricate the Church from that position, and to give her free scope for the unfolding of her spiritual influence, which was never more needed than it is at present,—while it would be a reparation for any share which your Lordship may unintentionally have had in placing the Church in that position, is assuredly one of the noblest objects, by the achievement of which a British statesman may at this time earn the gratitude of his country and the admiration of posterity.

Although the foregoing considerations might be deemed sufficient to warrant the liberty which I take, in soliciting your Lordship's attention to the subject discussed in the following pages, there is yet another ground on which I feel encouraged to do so.

Your Lordship has the reputation of being a bold statesman, one who, if he believes a certain course to

be the right one, is not easily deterred from entering upon it. This boldness which has marked your Lordship's political career, and which has been the subject of much public praise as well as censure, appears to me an additional reason why the present suggestion of measures of "justice to the Church of England," should be addressed to your Lordship in preference to any other man. And as I am one of those who believe, that boldness of action is, in a statesman especially, a virtue by reason of its very scarcity in days like ours, I can have no hesitation in frankly avowing the weight which this consideration has had with me; as well as the hope which I cherish, that the position of our Church pleaded for in these pages, may, however imperfect the plea, and however insignificant the pleader, take a prominent place in your Lordship's attention, and among the measures of your administration.

Permit me to subscribe myself, with profound respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's

Most humble and obedient Servant,

G. E. BIBER.

*Ashburton Lodge, Roehampton,
November, 1846.*