

**ON THE CONSTITUTION OF THE  
CHURCH AND STATE, ACCORDING  
TO THE IDEA OF EACH; WITH AIDS  
TOWARD A RIGHT JUDGMENT ON  
THE LATE CATHOLIC BILL**

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On the constitution of the church and state, according to the idea of each; with aids toward a right judgment on the late Catholic Bill by S. T. Coleridge

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**S. T. COLERIDGE**

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BY S. T. COLERIDGE, ESQ., R. A., R. S. L.

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1830.

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE occasion of this pamphlet will be sufficiently explained, by an extract from a letter to a friend :—  
“ You express your wonder that I, who have so often avowed my dislike to the introduction even of the word, Religion, in any special sense, in Parliament, or from the mouth of Lawyer or Statesman, speaking as such ; who have so earnestly contended, that Religion cannot take on itself the character of Law, without ipso facto ceasing to be Religion, and that Law could neither recognise the obligations of Religion for its principles, nor become the pretended Guardian and Protector of the Faith, without degenerating into inquisitorial tyranny—that I, who have avowed my belief, that if Sir Matthew Hale’s doctrine, that the Bible was a part of the Law of

the Land, had been uttered by a Puritan Divine instead of a Puritan Judge, it would have been quoted at this day, as a specimen of puritanical nonsense and bigotry—you express your wonder, that I, with all these heresies in my head, should yet withstand the measure of Catholic *Emancipation*, and join in opposing Sir Francis Burdett's intended Bill, for the repeal of the disqualifying statutes! And you conclude by asking: but is this true?

“My answer is: Here are two questions. To the first, viz., is it true that I am unfriendly to (what is called) Catholic *Emancipation*? I reply: No! the contrary is the truth. There is no inconsistency, however, in approving the *thing*, and yet having my doubts respecting the manner; in desiring the same end, and yet scrupling the means proposed for its attainment. When you are called in to a consultation, you may perfectly agree with another physician, respecting the existence of the malady and the expedience of its removal, and yet differ respecting the medicines and the method of cure. To your second question (viz., am I unfriendly to the present measure?) I shall return an answer no less explicit. Why I cannot return as brief a one,

you will learn from the following pages, transcribed, for the greater part, from a paper drawn up by me some years ago, at the request of a gentleman (that I have been permitted to call him my friend, I place among the highest honors of my life), an old and intimate friend of the late Mr. Canning's; and which paper, had it been finished before he left England, it was his intention to have laid before the late Lord Liverpool.

“From the period of the Union to the present hour, I have neglected no opportunity of obtaining correct information from books and from men, respecting the facts that bear on the question, whether they regard the existing state of things, or the causes and occasions of it; nor, during this time, has there been a single speech of any note, on either side, delivered, or reported as delivered, in either House of Parliament, which I have not heedfully and thoughtfully perused, abstracting and noting down every argument that was not already on the list, which, I need not say, has for many years past few accessions to boast of. Lastly, my conclusion I have subjected, year after year, to a fresh revisal, conscious but of one influence likely to warp my judgment, and this is the pain, I



might with truth add, the humiliation, of differing from men, whom I loved and revered, and whose superior competence to judge right in this momentous cause, I knew and delighted to know; and this aggravated by the reflection, that in receding from Burkes, Cannings, and Lansdownes, I did not move a step nearer to the feelings and opinions of their antagonists. With this exception, it is scarcely possible, I think, to conceive an individual less under the influences of the ordinary disturbing forces of the judgment, than your poor friend; or from situation, pursuits and habits of thinking, from age, state of health and temperament, less likely to be drawn out of his course by the under-currents of Hope, or Fear, of expectation or wish. But least of all, by predilection for any particular sect or party: for wherever I look, in religion or in politics, I seem to see a world of power and talent wasted on the support of half-truths, too often the most mischievous, because least suspected of errors. This may result from the spirit and habit of partizanship, the supposed inseparable accompaniment of a free state, which pervades all ranks, and is carried into all subjects. But whatever may be its origin, one

consequence seems to be, that every man is in a bustle, and except under the sting of excited or alarmed self-interest, scarce any one in earnest."

I had written a third part under the title of "What is to be done now?" consisting of illustrations from the History of the English and Scottish Churches, of the consequences of the ignorance or contravention of the principles, which I have attempted to establish in the first part; and of practical deductions from these principles, addressed chiefly to the English clergy. But I felt the embers glowing under the white ashes; and on reflection, I have considered it more expedient that the contents of this small volume should be altogether in strict conformity with the title; that they should be, and profess to be, no more and no other than *Ideas* of the Constitution in Church and State. And thus I may without inconsistency entreat the friendly reader to bear in mind the distinction I have enforced, between the exhibition of an idea, and the way of acting on the same; and that the scheme or diagram best suited to make the idea clearly understood, may be very different from the form in which it is or may be most adequately *realized*. And if the reason-

ings of this work should lead him to think, that a strenuous Opponent of the former attempts in Parliament may have given his support to the Bill lately passed without inconsistency, and without either being or meriting the name of *APOSTATE*, it may be to the improvement of his charity and good-temper, and not detract a tittle from his good sense or political penetration.

S. T. C.