

**THE CHURCH'S CLAIM AND ARCHDEACON
DENISON'S RESOLUTION COMPARED. A
LETTER TO THE LORD BISHOP OF OXFORD ON
THE PRESENT STATE OF THE CONTROVERSY
CONCERNING THE MANAGEMENT CLAUSES
OF THE COMMITTEE OF PRIVY COUNCIL**

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The Church's claim and archdeacon Denison's resolution compared. A letter to the Lord Bishop of Oxford on the present state of the controversy concerning the management clauses of the committee of privy council by Robert A. Gordon

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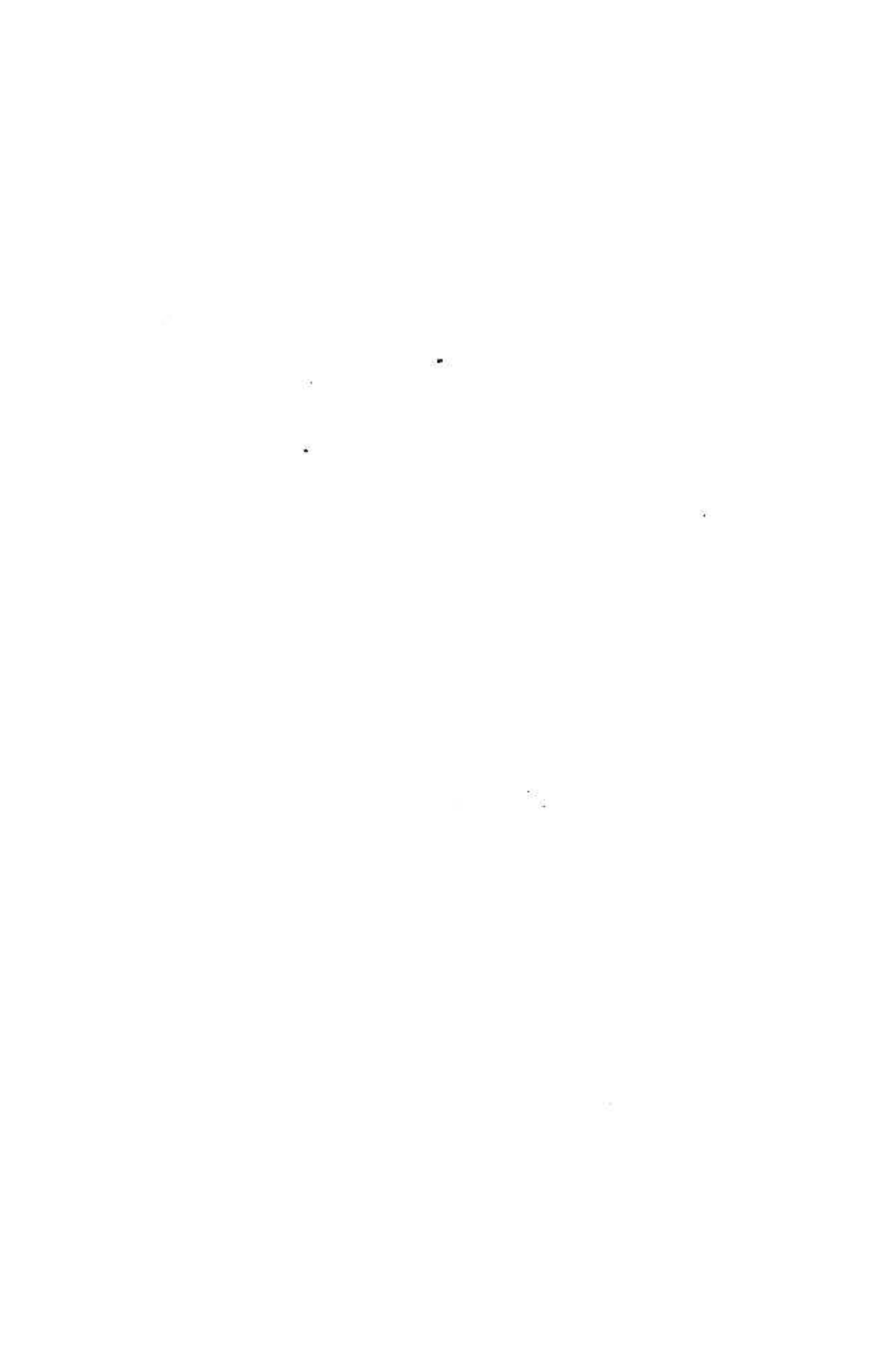
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ROBERT A. GORDON

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BY THE
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AND AN INSPECTOR OF SCHOOLS IN THE DIOCESE OF OXFORD.

OXFORD,
JOHN HENRY PARKER,
AND 377, STRAND, LONDON.
M DCCCLII.

141. C. 57.

MY DEAR LORD,

I THINK it a fact worthy of notice in the present divided state of opinion on the points on which the Committee of the National Society, and the Committee of the Privy Council are still at variance, that the whole body of School Inspectors of your Lordship's diocese should have been of one mind as to the position which the Church ought to maintain in her controversy with the State, on the questions at issue between them. I take this unanimity as a sign that there is a practical view of these questions, in which the majority of Churchmen interested in the great subject of National education may be expected to agree. For the twenty-three clergymen who formed the Meeting at your Lordship's palace at Cuddesdon were not representatives of any particular school within the Church, nor were they drawn together by common views on a controverted question. They were men appointed to their office on account of their practical interest in the education of the children of the Church, and were gathered

from every part of the diocese to discuss its present state and the means by which it might be advanced in their own districts. Though differing, I believe, on many points on which Churchmen do differ overmuch in the present day, they were yet essentially of one mind on the much vexed question of the forms of management imposed by the Committee of Council on founders of Church schools aided by their grants.

I am not, my Lord, led to be less hopeful that a somewhat similar unanimity may be possible among Churchmen generally, by the disapproval with which the resolution in which we were unanimous has been received by many, who I believe are at one with us on all essential points of principle. For I feel that our position has been very imperfectly understood. We have been misrepresented by some as if we were simply opposing that particular form of school management which vests its control in the clergyman solely, or as desiring to yield the right of its adoption at the dictation of the Privy Council, rather than as advocating a course by which we hoped that harmonious co-operation with the State might be attained, whilst every principle was fully maintained, and the interests of Church education effectually secured.

I believe, my Lord, that there is such a course open to us at the present time. The claim which Archdeacon Denison proposes to call on the National Society to assert at its next general meeting,

I believe to be a barrier to its attainment. It was with this feeling, that the body of Inspectors were unanimous in a resolution which condemned it; and that a similar resolution was subsequently adopted by a large majority of the Board of Education of the diocese.

But the claim in question, that the Committee of Council should assist with a building grant such founders of schools as refuse to adopt any other form of management than that vested in the clergyman solely, has so long been put forward as the point on which the whole controversy turns, that those who decline to press it are considered by many to be conceding the principle at issue. I believe, that many, who regret that the refusal of the Committee of Council to yield this claim should be urged as the especial grievance of the Church in the arbitrary enforcement of the management clauses, would yet think themselves bound as a point of principle to join in its assertion.

I am therefore very anxious to invite consideration to the question, what is the point of principle really at issue between the Church, and the State as represented by the late Committee of Privy Council? For my own part, I believe, that the principle which the Church is bound to maintain, is neither fairly represented, nor fully included, in the claim which Archdeacon Denison proposes to call upon the National Society to assert at its next General Meeting. The claim of the

Church is something larger and broader than this, and yet if calmly and temperately maintained, would, I think, be more fairly considered and more readily conceded, than the particular demand which has been so vehemently urged.

Now the point of principle which appears to me to be really at issue between the Government and the Church, is this ; that it does not belong to the Committee of Privy Council to determine arbitrarily what form of school management shall be adopted. The question between Archdeacon Denison, and the Oxford Inspectors and Educational Board, is not whether the Government should be allowed to dictate arbitrarily to the Church as to the way in which her schools should be managed, but how such dictation may best be resisted.

It must of course be conceded, that a body entrusted with the distribution of public money for a particular purpose, is not only justified in requiring, but bound to require, of those to whom a money-grant is made, the observance of certain conditions which shall secure its proper application to the purposes for which it was voted by Parliament.

It cannot be expected, or wished, that the Committee of Council should make building grants towards the erection of schools which have not been duly conveyed to proper trustees, or whose trust-deeds contain either no provision for their management, or one manifestly bad, as affording no proper security for their effective supervision. I can con-

ceive no course more injurious to the interests of Church education than this. The most decided opponents of the present management clause system admit that the Committee of Council may fairly require that every body of school founders to whom they make a grant, should lay before them "a proper trust-deed affording fair and reasonable security that good and sufficient Church education shall be given." If this be granted, and no more accurate rule be laid down, there is necessarily conceded to the Committee of Council the right of rejecting those applicants whose proposed management clauses do not appear to them to afford such reasonable security.

Now the only protection against the arbitrary exercise of this power is some definite arrangement as to what forms of management shall be accepted by the Committee of Council as satisfactory. If this point be left for particular discussion between the Committee of Council and every body of school founders who desire their aid, the interests of the Church would be exposed to considerable danger, when the members of the Committee might happen to be either hostile or indifferent to the objects she desires to secure. It is certain that very many promoters of schools would deliberately prefer the adoption of a management clause which they felt to afford insufficient security for the preservation of the doctrine and discipline of the Church, (in the hope that possible ill