

**DISSENT VINDICATED; A
DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT THE
ORDINATION OF THE REV.
JULIUS MARK, AT CHELMSFORD,
MAY 25TH, 1837**

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Dissent vindicated; A discourse delivered at the ordination of the Rev. Julius Mark, at Chelmsford, May 25th, 1837 by John Ely

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JOHN ELY

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DISCOURSE DELIVERED AT THE
ORDINATION OF THE REV.
JULIUS MARK, AT CHELMSFORD,
MAY 25TH, 1837**

DISSENT VINDICATED:

WITH A PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE QUESTION OF
NATIONAL RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENTS.

A

DISCOURSE,

DELIVERED AT THE

ORDINATION OF THE REV. JULIUS MARK,

AT

CHELMSFORD, MAY 25th, 1837.

By JOHN ELY,

MINISTER OF SAREM CHAPEL, LEEDS.

"Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them: but it shall not be so among you."—Matthew.

SECOND EDITION.

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1837.

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TO THE REV. JULIUS MARK,
AND THE CHURCH UNDER HIS PASTORAL CARE,

THE FOLLOWING

DISCOURSE

IS DEDICATED,

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF CHRISTIAN ESTEEM,

BY

THE AUTHOR.

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DISSENT VINDICATED.

"THE wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy." Much of this wisdom is required by the Church of God in the present posture of its affairs. Human mind has received an impulse; and amid its active workings, searching inquiry has extended itself to sacred themes, and especially to questions of ecclesiastical polity. Evidence has been demanded in support of positions that were wont to be sustained by authority. Discussion has issued in convictions, not always consonant with usage, and often startling to prejudice. Conviction has been freely avowed, and a hostile reaction has followed. Mind has been brought into collision with mind; and, in too many instances, strife and exasperation have ensued. On the one part, liberty is jealous of infringement; and on the other, there is a timid apprehension lest ancient landmarks should be removed.

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Amidst these agitations of the public mind, the Dissenter from the Ecclesiastical Establishment of his country finds himself in a painful position. To his practical dissent, toleration is vouchsafed, as a concession to his weak conscience: but no sooner does he *avow* his conscientious objections against the forms, and much more against the principle of the Establishment, than he is viewed with suspicion and subjected to obloquy. Such avowal is regarded as an offence; he is charged with the spirit of malignity, and even branded as a traitor to the cause of our common Christianity. It is, I say, a painful position. If conscience demands secession, it must be equally the dictate of conscience to avow and vindicate and promote the principles which necessitate secession; yet it is painful to be suspected of malignity to Christian brethren, because we argue against certain usages and principles to which they conform. It is no easy thing at once to avoid compromise, and to preserve temper. To combine decision with meekness, the love of truth with the gentleness of the gospel, sound logic with a right spirit,—we need much of that wisdom, which can only be imparted by the word and grace of God.

We are convened this day for observances which commit us to the principles of dissent. The ordination of our ministers by prayer and the laying on of hands, is a practical disclaimer of episcopal authority. The whole question of our dissent is involved. It is

reasonable that on such occasions we should state and argue our principles ; and it is the object of the Introductory Discourse usual at our ordination services, to explain and defend our views of Church order. In pursuance of this reasonable usage, let me claim the right of avowing the conscientious objections, which compel our own dissent ; and on the ground of which we feel obliged to urge its principles on the consciences of others. I shall endeavour to speak without reserve and without offence. I shall speak plainly, perhaps strongly ; but in no unkindly tone. I speak in the name of my brethren around me,—with whom I feel it an honour and a privilege to be this day associated ; and in whose name, I may, I am persuaded, speak with unblanching firmness,—but whom I cannot fitly represent unless I speak also with all Christian conciliation and love.

Before I proceed to the question at issue, let me, once for all, disclaim all that is inconsistent with Christian charity. We yield to none in attachment to our common Christianity : its great truths are our beloved themes ; we enforce its personal obligations in all our instructions ; its saving operation is our supreme concern. We rejoice to see truth and piety and salvation promoted ; and are gladdened when from time to time we learn that they are promoted by the instrumentality of the Episcopal Church. We disavow all malignity to that church. Yet we