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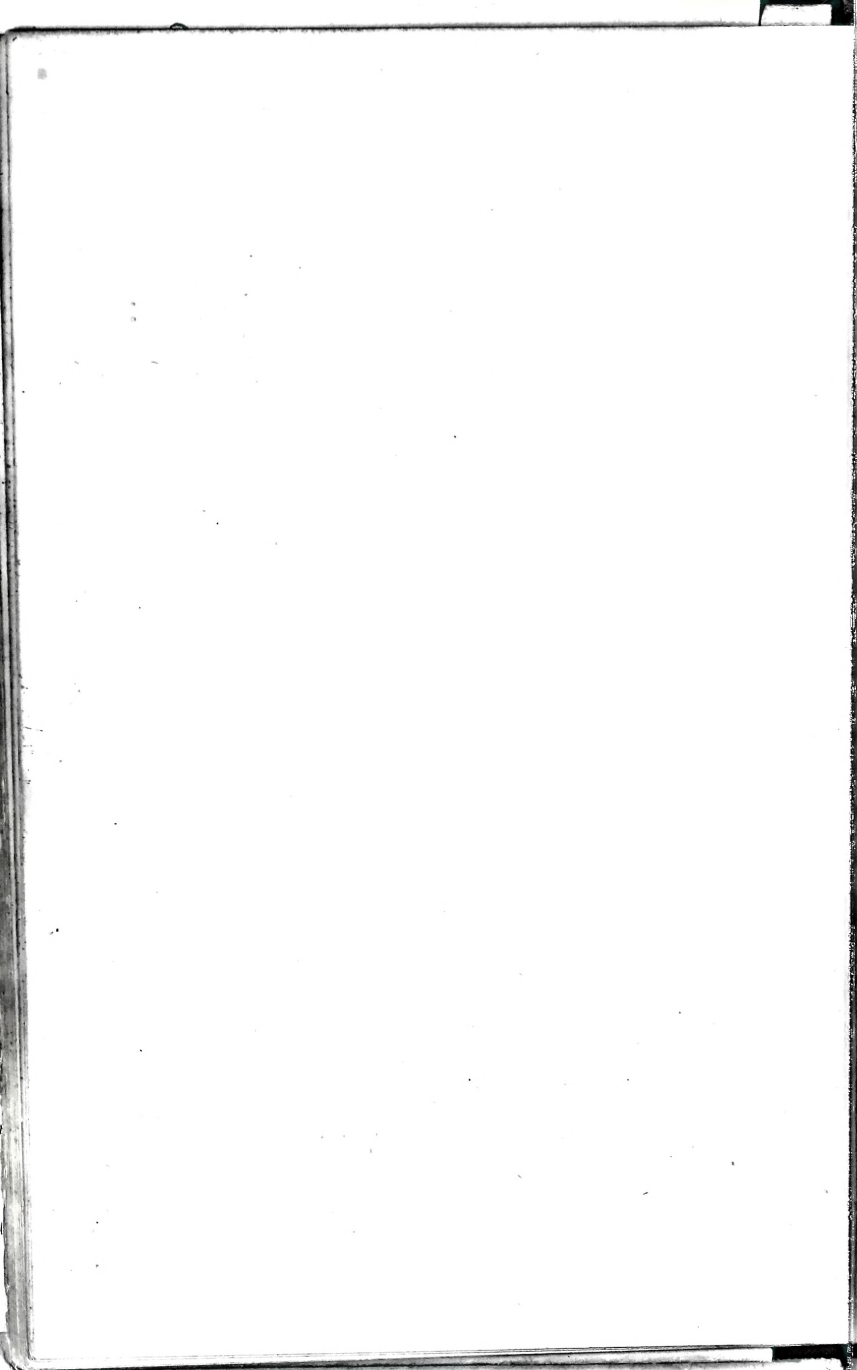
THE BISHOPS  
AND THEIR WEALTH:

CONTAINING  
SOME REMARKABLE EVIDENCE  
FROM  
THE PROBATE OFFICE.

BY THE  
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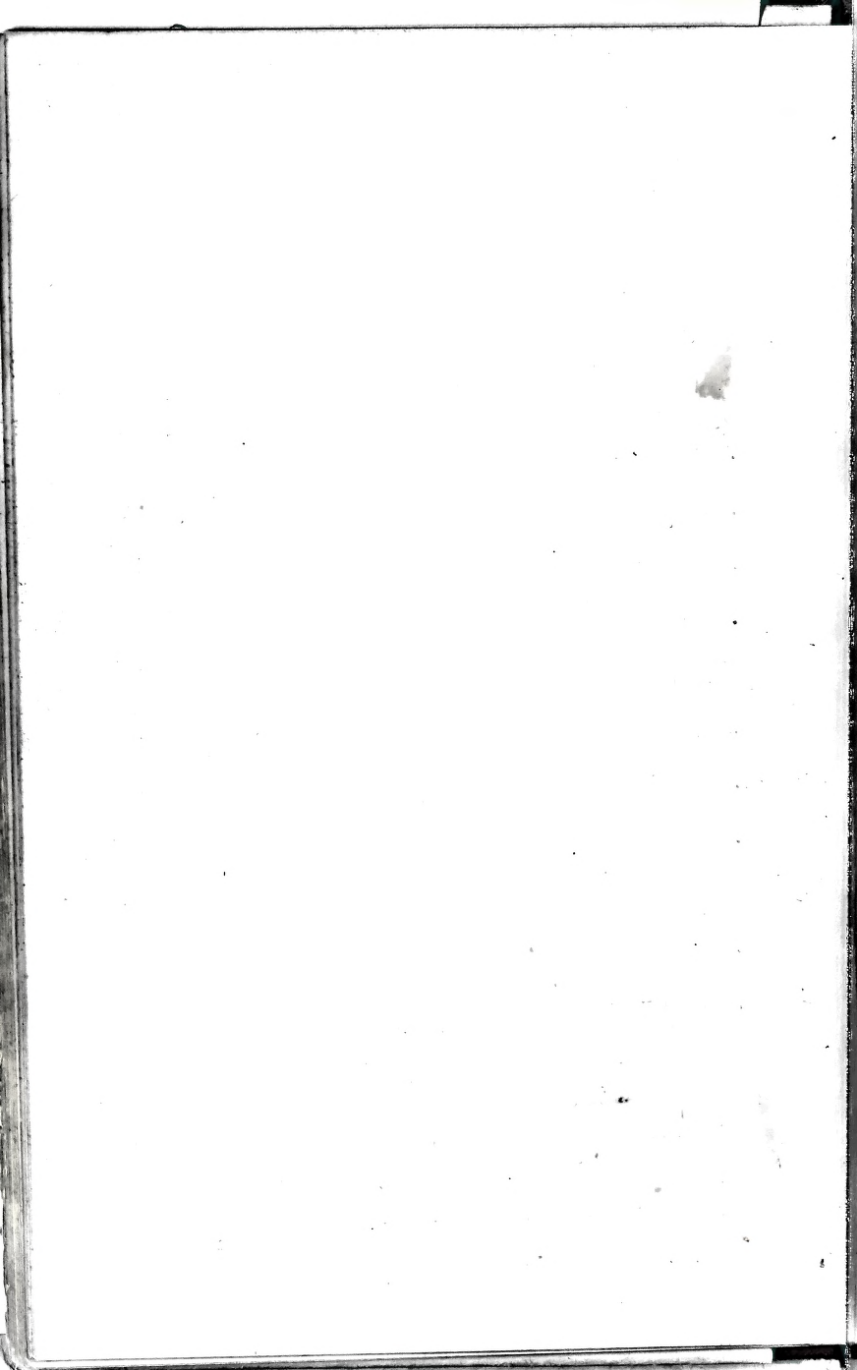
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## *THE BISHOPS AND THEIR WEALTH.*

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### I. ARE THE BISHOPS "ROLLING IN WEALTH"?

ONE of the most important points in reference to the position of the Established Church in England, is the wealth, or supposed wealth, of the upper ranks of its hierarchy. This is a point of great practical importance in itself; and it is one which occupies a very prominent place in the public mind. Perhaps there is hardly any other matter which so deeply and so widely affects the sentiments of large numbers of people, not only towards the Church, but towards Christianity and Religion generally, as this spectacle,—or, it may be, this spectre,—of the Bishops "rolling in riches." Whether it is a real, substantial, spectacle, or only a spectre, conjured up by the imagination, is a question that is yet to be determined. That the belief in this state of things is very widespread, that it is almost universal, shared in by members and friends of the Church, no less than by her enemies, is beyond question. And yet there are some persons who venture to dispute the truth of it; or at least who think the popular impeachment requires to be qualified by other considerations which are not

generally understood, and which, in a great measure, take away its sting. The truth of the matter evidently has not yet been sifted to the bottom ; and it appears therefore very desirable that any further light which can be thrown upon it, of an authentic and trustworthy character, should be presented to the public as soon as possible.

The Lord Bishop of Liverpool has lately published a series of ten short Papers on "Disestablishment."\*

There is certainly some very good common sense and plain-speaking in some of these papers ; especially in the ninth, where his Lordship takes up a theme which he has dealt with before,† in his own peculiar, earnest, and vigorous style, and where he says again, " We need reform : there is no mistake about that." But in the tenth and last of this present series, the Bishop makes the following assertions :—

" It is utterly untrue that the Bishops are rolling in wealth, and the Clergy are overpaid. The Bishops have so many demands on their purses that they can hardly make both ends meet ; and the Clergy, if incomes were divided, would not have three hundred a-year apiece."

I must confess that when I read these words, I was considerably surprised ; for I was myself very much impressed with the common opinion, that the Bishops at least—to say nothing of other dignitaries—were generally overpaid to a considerable extent, that their incomes were very much beyond the requirements of the position they occupy, that

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\* "Disestablishment"; a Series of Ten Papers by the Lord Bishop of Liverpool  
—London: Hunt & Co., 1885.

† "Church Reform," by the Rev. J. C. Ryle, B.A. Hunt & Co., 1870.

of Ministers of the Church of Christ. And, therefore, it immediately occurred to me that it would be desirable to ascertain the truth of this matter, as far as could conveniently be done. If Bishop Ryle's assertion should be found to be true, by all means let the Bishops have the benefit of it; and let the common prejudice which prevails on the subject be cleared away by the evidence of facts. If, on the other hand, it should be found that this assertion is made rashly and in error, then it is certainly no less necessary that the error should be corrected, and that the true facts of the matter, whatever they may be, should be clearly known and fairly taken into account, in dealing with this great question. And I have so much faith in the integrity and earnestness of the Bishop from whom I have quoted those words, that I believe he will be one of the first, in this case, to recognise the importance of the matter, and to make any such correction or qualification of his statement as truth may seem to require.

## II. HOW THE QUESTION IS TO BE DETERMINED.

“The Bishops have so many demands on their purses that they can hardly make both ends meet:”—this is the homely, but very intelligible assertion of the Bishop; and this, I believe, is the opinion entertained by at least a considerable number of persons within the Church. The assertion has now been for several months before the world, and as it has not been, I believe, in any way repudiated by the other Bishops, it must be taken to have at least their tacit concurrence.

Now, how is this matter to be tested?—It is easy to bring forward the amount of income belonging to the several Sees at the present time; and these figures must of course have some weight in the enquiry. But they are not conclusive by themselves alone. It is not denied that the incomes of the Bishops,—at least their nominal incomes,—are large: but then,—“they have so many demands on their purses.”—No doubt, they have: demands, of infinite variety. They have, most of them, large palaces, which they are bound to keep in repair, and the maintenance of which necessitates a large and constant outlay: they have demands for support to all religious and charitable Institutions, both in their own several dioceses, and connected with the Church at large: personal expenses, to a large extent, which they cannot avoid, especially if they are to attend to their duties in Parliament. All these things,—and I cannot pretend to give anything like an adequate summary of them,—all these things, the Bishops may fairly plead, impose heavy burdens on their purses, whether they like it or not. But is it the fact that their resources are generally exhausted hereby? Is their expenditure nearly on a level with their income, and unavoidably so? Do they barely contrive to make both ends meet, to keep out of debt, with very little over?—If we might ask what is their balance at the banker’s, or what are their private investments in Consols, and such like, we might get an answer to these questions. We cannot do this, however, with regard to those Bishops who are still living among us; nor can we expect them to volunteer such a public declaration of their private affairs as was



made by one of their most eminent predecessors. "Silver and gold have I none," said St. Peter, on a very notable occasion.

But although we must not scrutinize too closely the affairs of the living, we know that certain facts are occasionally published in the Newspapers, which bear very directly upon this question ; and which, being so made public, must be deemed to be matters of public interest, and subject to public comment. From time to time we read that the Will of some Prelate, lately deceased, has been proved in the Probate Court, and that his personal effects have been sworn to, at a certain value. And some of the amounts so published have been certainly rather remarkable, and such as fairly to lead up to that impression, which as I have said, does undoubtedly prevail to a large extent in the public mind. But the question is whether these individual instances of wealth are only rare and exceptional, or whether they may be taken to indicate the general position of the Bishops as a class. Now as this field of enquiry is entirely open to the public, as anybody is at liberty to ascertain these facts from a public office, on the payment of a small fee, and as the matter is clearly one of much public importance, there can be no feeling of impropriety or intrusion in entering upon such an investigation, and no breach of confidence in making known such facts. The life and conduct of a Bishop, as of any other public man, after he has passed away, have become matters of history ; and no one can object to the publication of such authentic particulars, but those who feel that they cannot be justified or excused.

## III. EVIDENCE FROM THE PROBATE OFFICE.

With these views therefore I have collected together the amounts of personalty sworn to, upon the death of the various Bishops who have held office in the Church of England, during the last thirty years, from 1856 to the close of 1885: and I now present the results of my enquiries in the following Table:—

TABLE, showing the Names of the Bishops of England and Wales, deceased, from 1856 to 1885; with the amount of Personalty proved at their death.

Conse- crated.	NAME.	SEE.	Re- signed.	Died.	Years of Bishop- ric.	Nominal Income of See.	Amount of Person- alty.
1827	Hon. Hugh Percy	Carlisle ...		1856	29	£ 4,500	£ 90,000
1830	Jas. H. Monk ...	G. and B. ...		1856	26	5,000	140,000
1824	C. J. Blomfield	Chest: Lon:	1856	1857	32	10,000	60,000
1824	Chr. Bethell ...	Bangor ...		1859	35	4,000	20,000
1831	Edw. Maltby ...	Chich: Dur:		1859	28	8,000	120,000
1813	Geo. Murray ...	Rochester...		1860	47	5,000	60,000
1837	Thos. Musgrave	Heref: York		1860	23	10,000	70,000
1840	Henry Pepys ...	Worcester		1860	20	5,000	50,000
1856	Hon. H. M. Vil- liers ...	Durham ...		1861	5	8,000	20,000
1826	J. B. Sumner ...	Chest: Cant:		1862	34	15,000	60,000
1845	Thos. Turton ...	Ely ...		1864	19	5,500	40,000
1839	Geo. Davys ...	Peterboro'		1864	25	4,500	80,000
1848	John Graham ...	Chester ...		1865	17	4,500	18,000
1860	J. C. Wigram...	Rochester...		1867	7	5,000	45,000
1843	John Lonsdale	Lichfield ...		1867	24	4,500	90,000

Conse- crated.	NAME.	SEE.	Re- signed.	Died.	Years of Bishop- ric.	Nominal Income of See.	Amount of Person- alty.
1849	Samuel Hinds	Norwich ...	1857	1868	8	£ 4,500	— *
1848	R. D. Hampden	Hereford ...		1868	20	4,200	45,000
1864	Francis Jeune ...	Peterboro'		1868	4	4,500	35,000
1836	C. T. Longley ...	Rip : Cant :		1868	32	15,000	45,000
1854	W. K. Hamilton	Salisbury ...		1869	15	5,000	14,000
1831	H. Philpotts ...	Exeter ..		1869	38	5,000	60,000
1860	Hon. S. Walde- grave ...	Carlisle ...		1869	9	4,500	20,000
1848	J. P. Lee ...	Manchester		1869	21	4,200	40,000
1842	A. T. Gilbert ...	Chichester		1870	28	4,200	12,000
1847	Lord Auckland	B. and W.	1869	1870	22	5,000	120,000
1841	T. V. Short ...	St. Asaph	1870	1872	29	4,200	14,000
1845	S. Wilberforce	Oxf:Winch:		1873	28	7,000	60,000
1826	C. R. Sumner ...	Winchester	1869	1874	43	10,000	80,000
1840	Con. Thirlwall	St. David's	1874	1875	34	4,500	16,000
1841	G. A. Selwyn ...	N.Z : Lichf :		1878	37	4,500	16,000
1856	Chas. Baring ...	G.&B : Dur:		1879	23	8,000	120,000
1856	A. C. Tait ...	Lon : Cant :		1882	26	15,000	35,000
1849	Alf. Ollivant ...	Llandaff ...		1882	33	4,200	30,000
1857	Rob. Bickersteth	Ripon ...		1884	27	4,500	25,000
1865	W. Jacobson ...	Chester ...		1884	19	4,500	65,000
1853	John Jackson ...	Linc : Lon :		1885	32	10,000	72,000
1868	C. Wordsworth	Lincoln ...	1885	1885	17	5,000	85,000
1869	Geo. Moberly ...	Salisbury ...		1885	16	5,000	29,000
1870	Jas. Fraser ...	Manchester		1885	15	4,200	85,000
1873	J. R. Woodford	Ely ...		1885	12	5,500	19,000

\* I have not been able to find any particulars of Bishop Hinds' estate. He resigned his Bishopric under somewhat peculiar circumstances; and died, I believe, an honest, but a very poor, man

M. D.

It appears then from this Table that, whatever may have been the demands upon their purses, either of a public and official, or of a private and personal nature, these individual Bishops were, at the time of their death, in possession of personal property, varying in value from twelve thousand to one hundred and forty thousand pounds; the average being about £54,000 a-piece, and the total personalty of the 39 Bishops being over two millions sterling; this being exclusive of any real estate they may have possessed, and exclusive also of any sums invested in policies of Life Assurance, or otherwise settled for the benefit of their families. These are facts, indisputable facts, which anyone may verify for himself at the cost of a very little trouble and expense; and they are facts of recent date, perfectly relevant to the question at issue. What are the inferences to be drawn from them?

#### IV. BISHOP RYLE'S ASSERTION CONTRADICTED.

First of all, I think we are compelled to say that this Table directly contradicts the assertion of the Bishop of Liverpool. Out of the 39 instances here given, the amount of personalty is in only 7 cases below £20,000; the lowest of all being £12,000. Not one of all these Bishops could have been in the position indicated by Bishop Ryle, hardly able to meet the various demands upon his purse from all quarters; and certainly not one anywhere near to that condition which is unhappily only too common, too literally true, of many Ministers of Religion, "hardly able to



make both ends meet"; hardly able to provide absolute necessaries for themselves and their families, out of the scanty pittance bestowed upon them. Nothing of this sort could be said of any one of those Prelates: so far from this being the case, it is clear that most of them must have saved annually large sums out of their income; that income, no doubt, in many cases coming from private sources in addition to the revenue of their Sees. Is there any possibility of escape from this conclusion? I see none whatever; and therefore, in the first place, I think it is right that the truth should be acknowledged in this matter, the plain truth of the case, whatever conclusion it may lead to. It is not the fact—and I think the Bishop of Liverpool will much regret that he should have been led so hastily, though, no doubt, quite sincerely and in good faith, to assert the contrary in such positive terms—but with those figures before us, I think we are compelled to say it is not the fact that these Bishops have in any one case had any difficulty in meeting the various demands made upon their purses; but, on the contrary, they have had large sums to spare, to lay by; and in most cases, the popular idea, which Bishop Ryle so vehemently repudiates, that they were "rolling in wealth," turns out to be abundantly justified.

#### V. CAN THIS POSITION BE JUSTIFIED.

Now the inference which will generally be drawn from these facts, and which at first sight seems to follow

inevitably, will be one of condemnation ; condemnation, to some extent of the individual Bishops themselves ; and still more, perhaps, of the system to which they belonged, and which produced or permitted these results. But there are some considerations on the other side which will be urged to mitigate this condemnation. First, it will be said that riches and wealth are comparative terms, depending upon the position which a man occupies. A thousand a year would be great wealth to any man of the artizan class, or even to many poor clergymen and others who have to live by the work of their brains ; while yet the same sum would be felt as downright poverty by any great merchant or nobleman. Five thousand a year, therefore, or even ten thousand, some will say, is not too great an income for a man who holds a place among the Peers of the realm, and who is expected to keep up his position accordingly. Again it will be said that in many of the cases cited above, these Bishops were men belonging to high or wealthy families, and had large private means of their own, in addition to their episcopal revenues. Many of them also were men of talent, who increased their incomes by literary labours, and who could, perhaps, have gained quite as much from other sources, mercantile or professional, as they received from the Church. And again, there may be others who will argue that whatever they received as Bishops came to them honestly, as the authorised revenues of their Sees ; and that at any rate, whether these revenues were large or small, *they* did not create that state of things, but simply came into it, and accepted what was given to them by custom or by statute. If the question is to be looked at from a

worldly point of view, and judged by the tone of feeling which prevailed in former days, even in the first half of this century, and within the memory of many men still living, then indeed much weight may be given to such considerations as these. But I venture to say, we know better in the present day; we are not to be blind-folded now by the traditions of past generations; nor must we attempt to maintain any principles or practices which have nothing better than traditional usage to recommend them; which are not in accordance with the true and fundamental principles of the Church itself. No, I think it is time now to go back to first principles, and to ask, What is a Christian Bishop? What are his duties? What should be his character? What should be his position?

#### VI. TRUE AND FALSE VIEWS OF A BISHOP'S OFFICE.

What are the Bishops of the Church of England?—We know how the world in general looks upon them; as Clergymen who have distinguished themselves by learning, by preaching, or otherwise, and who, by favour of the Prime Minister for the time being, have been advanced to the highest rank of their profession; with a seat in the House of Lords, and a good income to correspond. In the eyes of the world, a Bishopric is a great prize: and who shall say how many a man, even among the Clergy themselves, has looked upon it in the same light, and hoped for it as the highest dream of his ambition! This is the outside, superficial view of the matter. But it is idle to ignore the truth that there is another and a much more

serious estimate of the position ; an estimate so grave, and yet so evidently true, that it seems marvellous how so many men, even including some Bishops themselves, could apparently shut their eyes to it. A Bishop is a man who has undertaken the highest, the gravest, the most onerous, the most responsible office which any man can undertake in this world—to preach the Gospel of Christ, to deliver a message which he believes to have come from Almighty God, and to be the great instrument of saving men's souls from perdition, and bringing them to eternal life. This, at any rate, whatever other men think of Christianity, this is what *he* professes to believe ; and it is strictly on the strength of this profession that he holds his office in the Church, with all the advantages and responsibilities belonging to it. If he does not really believe in these fundamental principles, these manifest doctrines of his Bible and his Prayer-book, then he is clearly living under false pretences : and no itinerant fortune-teller, who pretends to some sort of supernatural gifts ; no “ Clerical impostor,” who passes himself off for an ordained Clergyman, by false “ Letters of Orders,” is more worthy of reprobation than a man who, in the position of a Bishop, and for the sake of a Bishop's emoluments, professes to deliver a message from God, and to convey spiritual gifts, which he does not himself truly believe in. This however, in the most general terms, is a Bishop's duty, to preach the Gospel, to preach and enforce its truths, its principles, its hopes, and its warnings, with all the ability, and with all the means that he possesses : and not merely to preach it as one man out of many, but to be the chief preacher thereof



in his own particular field of labour, in his own Diocese. And I think we may safely say that if he cannot preach it sincerely, he had better not try to do it at all. We are not indeed to expect a Bishop, who is still only a man, to be absolutely perfect; he may not be able to show forth in his own character all the virtues and all the graces which he must insist upon or recommend to others: but at least, there must be some relation between preaching and practice; any great discrepancy between the two must not only be fatal to his own efficiency, but must even expose him to ridicule. And yet, simple and commonplace as this truism must appear, can it be denied that this discrepancy does exist to a very serious extent, in the case of the Bishops of modern times? In many respects, their public character and position are palpably at variance with the principles they have to teach; and in nothing, perhaps, is this variance more conspicuous, in nothing is it more serious, than in this matter with which we are now dealing, the high emoluments which they enjoy.

## VII. CHRISTIAN TEACHING ABOUT RICHES.

The subject of riches is one which occupies a very prominent place in the ethics of Christianity; as indeed it must necessarily do in any system of religion or philosophy which attempts to deal practically with human wants and desires. Some means of living we must all have. If all men were content with a moderate supply of the ordinary wants of human nature, probably there would be

a sufficient amount of food and other necessaries within easy reach of all : not all ready to hand without any trouble ; but fairly within the reach of those who would use the powers and faculties which Nature has given them for this purpose. Unhappily, many men,—a very large proportion, I fear we must say,—are not satisfied with their own fair share of the good things of this world ; but having obtained the means of grasping a great deal more than is necessary for themselves, they leave a corresponding deficiency for the rest of mankind. This is the principle of selfishness ; and while, no doubt, it may be found at work in all the various conditions of the human race, barbarous or civilized, there is evidently in some respects more scope for its development in what we call a high state of civilization, such as our own,—much more than in a more primitive state, where men have to live more directly upon the fruits of nature, and to gather them daily with their own hands. Now, the teaching of Christianity is directed most earnestly and most unequivocally against this principle of selfishness : it attacks the love of riches, with the consequent desire of accumulating money, on all sides, and on various grounds. As nourishing self-indulgence, and the lower appetites of the flesh, instead of the higher aspirations after spiritual life ; as showing a want of faith in the goodness and providence of the Creator ; but most especially as showing a want of love and sympathy towards our fellow creatures, and oftentimes inflicting even grievous injustice and suffering upon them,—for all these reasons Christianity condemns the principle of covetousness and selfishness : and it enforces all these lessons by dis-

playing the greatest example of unselfishness, of love, of self-sacrifice, which the world has ever seen. Whatever men may think about the personality or the Divinity of Jesus of Nazareth, this at least is not denied, that his was a grand example of self-sacrifice, of voluntary self-devotion for the good of others ; and that, as such, it is worthy to be held up not only for the respect and admiration of men, but also most signally for their imitation. These are some of the prime lessons and principles of Christianity ; and I venture to say with great confidence, that of all the theories and conclusions arrived at in the field of political economy ; of all the methods proposed by men for controlling and correcting the evils of poverty, and the multifarious difficulties of social existence, this great principle of the Gospel, the principle of unselfishness, of brotherhood, of love, is not only the most elevated, but it is the most effectual, the most indispensable. Without this, all others must inevitably fail. Such is the constitution of the world, and of man himself as much as any other part of it, that some individuals will always be stronger than others ; more powerful in frame of body, or in intellect, or in shrewdness, or by having a better start in life ; and these favoured individuals, if they choose to push their own advantages, and to use them for their own selfish ends, must always be able to oppress those that are weaker, in spite of any human laws to the contrary. The true remedy is to govern and rectify *the hearts of men* : and there is no power that has yet been known in the world more able to do this than the faithful preaching of Christianity.

## VIII. WHY THE BISHOPS CANNOT DO THEIR DUTY.

And this is the work that is put into the hands of the Bishops of the Christian Church ; this is the work which our own Bishops have undertaken to perform : having in the first place received a direct commission thereto from their predecessors in the Ministry, and one that, as most of them probably believe, is ultimately derived from the Apostles, and from Christ himself : having also, in the second place, been appointed to their offices, and endowed with their revenues by the Crown, or the Civil Power of the Nation. And the Nation is now asking, with much eagerness, as it is certainly entitled to ask, Have they done the work which they undertook to do ? Have they fairly and adequately fulfilled those great duties for which such ample opportunities, such liberal endowments, have been given to them, and on which the welfare of the people so intimately depends ? Have they effectually rooted out the principle of selfishness, of covetousness, and planted a spirit of Christian brotherhood in place of it ? Have they even made any substantial progress in this direction ?— These are not vain questions, asked merely for rhetorical effect : they are matters of the deepest and widest importance. Men and women are living and dying, by thousands, in the midst of poverty, hardship, suffering, and misery, which ought to be remedied, which might be remedied ; the existence of which is a disgrace to us as a professedly Christian Nation. The fault of these things must lie heavily somewhere ; and amongst other classes that are partly responsible for it, no small portion of the blame



must undoubtedly rest upon the Church itself. THE CHURCH HAS NOT DONE ITS DUTY TO THE NATION : it has not evangelized the masses ; it has not Christianized the middle and upper ranks of the community. And if the Church, as a whole, has not done its work in these respects, it must clearly be the Rulers of the Church who are chiefly in fault. A great battle is not won by the desultory fighting of the rank and file of an army, and of its subaltern officers. There must be a General in supreme command, a man of ability, a man of energy, a man who has his heart in the cause for which he is engaged. Assuredly, the chief responsibility in this matter lies with the Bishops personally. One stirring Sermon preached in the heart of this Metropolis, preached with earnestness, preached with the power which goes only with perfect sincerity, preached by the Church's chief Minister and Representative,—such a Sermon would be listened to and remembered ; such a Sermon, or a few of them, if they were indeed worthy of their subject, would produce an effect on the public mind, a lasting and practical effect on public religion and morals. But when has any such Sermon been preached, on the subject of riches and covetousness, on Christian brotherhood and unselfishness ? Who has ever heard it, or even heard of it ? No : the thing has been impossible ; and for the simple reason that the Bishops themselves, with very few exceptions, have been among the greatest offenders against these very principles which it is their bounden duty to enforce. Their tongues are tied, their lips are closed, upon such a topic ; the words which ought to be heard would verily stick in

their throat if they attempted to utter them. No man,—the case is as clear as daylight,—certainly no Bishop could possibly stand up before a Congregation, and declare those solemn warnings of the New Testament on the subject of laying up treasure upon earth, how hard it is for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of Heaven, and such like, while he knew that he himself had been steadily laying by large sums of money for the last twenty or thirty years of his life, and that he was at that moment in possession of capital, to the amount of fifty, sixty, or seventy thousand pounds. Yet these are the facts of the case ; facts, which are now no secret, but which are entirely public property, which any man is entitled to know. Ought they not to be known ?

#### IX. THE INFLUENCE OF THEIR EXAMPLE.

The Bishops, of all men in the world, ought to be the most eminent examples of obedience to the words of their Divine Master ; the salt of the earth, the light of the world. But the position which they now hold compels men to ask this serious question,—Do the Bishops themselves believe in the truth and divine authority of these Holy Scriptures ? Is it possible that they can really believe in the truth or the force of those precepts, so repeatedly and earnestly insisted on by Christ and His Apostles, when they are so plainly setting them at defiance ? There is no disguising the fact that such questions as these *are raised* very extensively among all ranks of society, and are answered in a spirit adverse to the Bishops themselves.

And I think it is hardly possible to overrate the gravity of the issues involved in this circumstance. The character and authority of the Bible is one of the most vital and fundamental questions in religion ; vital, not only as a matter of controversy, but as one of deep practical importance to every sincere and earnest seeker after truth. But it is a question which cannot be solved for the bulk of mankind by appeal to historical and critical arguments. Such arguments, difficult even for learned Scholars, are altogether beyond the reach of ordinary people. The only practical argument for the world in general,—that which has always been the real working power in religion,—is the sincerity and earnestness of the preachers themselves. If they, the Ministers of the Gospel, show that they thoroughly believe the message which they preach, and live according to it in their own persons as far as may be practicable, then their words and their example combined will not fail to produce a due effect on the rest of the world. But if there is any manifest inconsistency between the two, the preaching and the practice, then the inevitable result must be to cast a suspicion, not only upon their own integrity, but upon the truth of that message of which they profess to be the authorized bearers. And the world has seen so much of priestcraft, so much of lying fables told in the name of Religion, that there is indeed no small excuse for men, if, in doubtful cases, they lean rather to the side of incredulity than otherwise. Can it be doubted that a very heavy responsibility does lie upon the Clergy generally, and most especially upon the Bishops, on this account ? Whatever amount of unbelief, of irreligion, is produced by

the influence of their example, will they not have to answer for it ?

#### X. NOT POVERTY, BUT MODERATION, REQUIRED.

There are many other grounds also, both of principle and of practice, on which the possession of great wealth in the Ministers of the Christian Church is clearly injurious and indefensible ; but I will not dwell upon them on the present occasion. It is perhaps hardly necessary to observe that in making this protest against excessive wealth, I do not intend to advocate anything like the opposite extreme. We need not suppose that it is necessary for every minister of Christ in the present day to surrender all his temporal possessions, as many of the Apostles did, in order to follow this calling. St. Paul himself claims for those who labour in this vocation, as well as in any other, at least a reasonable maintenance ; “the labourer is worthy of his hire.” And not only this, but he says also very reasonably, “Let the Elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, or double payment.” But still, moderation is clearly required ; and a man who is covetous, or who accumulates large sums of money, is as much disqualified for the office of a Bishop, as one who is a winebibber, a passionate man, or a polygamist. And this applies not only to the case of rich endowments and high stipends drawn from within the Church ; but also to wealth derived from external sources. It is sometimes pleaded as a merit of the present condition of our Church, that so much money is brought into it by individual members of



the Clergy, men who have private incomes of their own, and spend much of them in their own parishes. No doubt, many of those large sums which appear in our Table, were derived in a great measure from private property; and therefore, in the view of some persons, the fact of these large amounts of personalty being left at their death is not to be imputed as a fault to those individual Bishops. But pleas of this kind, as I have before said, though they may be all very well from a worldly point of view, yet clearly they do not hold good against the plain and wide-reaching words of Christ himself. His words, on this as on many other points, are undoubtedly of a most uncompromising character; and men must either serve him on his own terms, or not at all. A rich man therefore, if he wishes to keep his money for his own personal use and enjoyment, should at least avoid the responsibility of becoming a Minister of the Church of Christ; above all, he should not accept a Bishopric, as so many men have done, for the sake of the social position and advantages which it gives him. Or, on the other hand, if he desires the office for its own sake, he must be prepared to devote his money freely, as well as every other talent that he possesses, to the great work he undertakes. Indeed, I do not hesitate to say that a man who was really possessed of a proper Christian spirit *could not* keep these large sums of money in his own possession; he could hardly do it in any sphere of life; least of all could he do it as a Chief Pastor and Shepherd of Christ's flock. Seeing all the distress and misery existing around him, and which, as a Bishop, it is his duty to see and to care for, so much suffering which is un-

deserved, so much which might be at once effectually relieved by a small donation from his own purse, the mere crumbs from his own rich table :—I say, a Bishop who saw all this, and possessed but a reasonable measure of humanity and true Christian charity, would never be able to keep his purse strings closed. A Bishop without humanity is an anomaly, indeed ! Surely, the tale of Dives and Lazarus, which is so often repeated upon earth, will be repeated also in its terrible sequel, and with startling effect upon some of those who have “ prophesied in Christ’s name,” but have not done their best to feed the hungry, and to clothe the naked : unless indeed all these words are altogether an empty fable !

As to the other case, where men have actually enriched themselves out of the revenues of the Church, this is, of course, much worse than the former one ; and it is difficult to speak of it in terms of truth and justice, without using language which might seem intemperate.—“ Will a man rob God ? ”—This is a question which is sometimes applied to those who resist the payment of tithes and other ecclesiastical charges for purposes which they do not care for, or do not approve of. But I think the man who robs God most truly and most daringly, is he who appropriates to his own personal indulgence and aggrandizement the proceeds of a rich benefice, the funds which have been dedicated to the service of God, of His Church, or of the poor ; funds which are urgently needed for all these important objects. The offence indeed is common enough ; but I do not think it will escape condemnation on this account.

## XI. WHO IS TO BLAME—THE MEN, OR THE SYSTEM ?

That the condition of Bishops "rolling in wealth" is altogether inconsistent with their office, is indeed too plain to need further argument. The truth is clearly admitted in that sentence which I have quoted from Bishop Ryle in the beginning of this Paper: the very vehemence with which he repudiates the imputation implies not only a condemnation of such a state of things, but also that such condemnation is a self-evident and palpable truism. The Bishop is sound enough in his principles; but unfortunately, he is very far from being correct in his facts.

The practical question then is this: Is all the blame for this state of things to be laid upon the heads of those individual Bishops themselves; or is it to be attributed in a great measure to the System in which they were placed? It seems indeed impossible that they should be altogether acquitted as individuals for that disregard of the divine commandments of which they have individually been guilty. But yet, looking at the general character of the persons to whom these observations apply,—some of them surely good and earnest men,—we can hardly bring ourselves to believe that the whole responsibility lies upon them personally. And if not so, then the only alternative must be to lay very much of it upon the system, the position, the Constitution of our Church, as it now exists. And this, I believe, is the true and fair explanation of the matter. A Bishop, in the present day, is evidently placed in a false position: even if he desires to be faithful to his calling, it is hardly possible for him to be so. With

his large income, and his flattering position in Society, he can hardly help being, to a very great extent, a man of the world, subject to the influences of the world, subject to the feelings, the ambitions of the world, and continually tempted to conciliate the favour of the world. It is indeed a cruel temptation for one who ought to be pre-eminently a man of God, a servant of God: it is all the more perilous, because it is so insidious; it may exist in company with such a very fair, very respectable exterior.

How the mischief is to be corrected,—by reform, by disestablishment or disendowment,—these are wide and difficult questions with which I will not attempt to deal further in this place. I confine myself here to this single point, which is certainly not yet generally recognised as clearly as it ought to be, namely, that the mere fact of Ministers of the Church holding these positions of wealth and worldly grandeur is an evil in itself; mischievous to themselves, mischievous to the Church at large: and I do not think that any reform in the Church will be effectual or satisfactory until this state of things is thoroughly got rid of.

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*Note on the Tenor Clef.*

The Tenor stave consists really of the three upper lines of the Bass stave, the one lowest of the Treble, with the middle C line included. In these pages this middle C line is left blank. By this plan it is hoped that the difficulty of reading the Tenor Clef (so common with amateurs) will be entirely removed.—  
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