

speech, and said something indistinctly about the principal responsibility as regarded the people of Clackington resting with him rather than with the Bishop.

"A very heavy responsibility rests upon you, no doubt," replied the Bishop, "but certainly not the *principal* responsibility—that is the awful and inalienable burden of the Episcopate. The souls of the people in each diocese are committed to us, who have succeeded to the office of those to whom our Lord said, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature;' and since it is manifestly impossible for us to attend to all, in our own persons, the other orders of the ministry act as our representatives, even as we are sent to 'beseech men,' in *Christ's stead*, to be reconciled to God."

"Does your lordship mean that while Bishops have a divine commission, Priests and Deacons can claim a human authority only?"

"Of course I mean nothing of the kind," replied the Bishop; "if we sent the subordinate orders of the clergy by our own human authority, then they would have none, because, of ourselves, we have none; but, as our Lord sends us by *His* transmitted authority, we hand on officially to the orders beneath us such a measure of that right to minister in holy things which has been committed to us, as empowers them to execute their office with authority equal to our own in its nature, though different from it in its degree."

"But how does this affect the question of the division of the parish? if your lordship will allow me to return to that point?"

"It affects it directly and most vitally," returned the Bishop; "for if the views which I have expressed are true, then every parish Priest, whether he be Incumbent, Vicar, Rector, or be known by any other title, is simply the Curate of the Bishop—a fact which the church declares daily in the Collect appointed to be said at morning and evening prayer, wherein we pray for all 'Bishops and Curates,'—the latter expression including all the inferior clergy, and declaring them all in their several offices to be simply the agents and representatives of the Bishop."

"I beg you to pardon my dullness of comprehension," said Mr. Slowton; "but I am still unable to see how all this applies to Clackington."

"Why in this way," answered the Bishop, smiling, "if I am responsible for the people of this place—if I, in fact, am their Pastor, then it follows that you are my Curate, commissioned by me to do that which, from the limited nature of human powers, I am myself unable to perform. If I give my curate more than he is able to do, I not only deal rather hardly by him, but I am bound to relieve him, as soon as possible, from responsibilities which he is unable to discharge, by dividing the parish over which he has been placed, and sending another Curate to do *my* work in that portion of the charge of which the former has been relieved."

"If your lordship is going to put this theory into general practice, I don't know what will become of the clergy unless you can multiply means as fast as you multiply men."

"There, no doubt, is the great difficulty," replied the bishop; "it is indeed a most grievous thing to see so many earnest men aiding me in feeding the flock which in God's providence has been committed to my care—toiling on from year to year with charges large enough for a diocese, and yet be unable to help them with anything beyond kind words of sympathy to them, and prayers for a blessing upon their work to God, and to think that the great cause is the want of means—a want arising not from any want of ability on the part of the people, but from a want of will."

"The same want of will is very widely extended," observed Mr. Slowton; "and I fear you will find it prevailing in Clackington as much as in other places, if I may judge from the difficulty I have found in raising money for charitable and religious uses."

"But don't you think," asked the bishop, "that one great cause of this disinclination to support God's ministers and worship is greatly to be attributed to our own want of courage in shrinking from setting the whole truth of Holy Scripture before the people, on this duty?"

"I am afraid, my lord, that it will take greater eloquence than I possess, to persuade the people of this town to supply the funds necessary to carry out your lordship's project."

"It is not eloquence," replied the bishop, "but *truth*, plainly but earnestly and lovingly set forth, that is needed to rouse men's consciences to their own duty and the carrying out of the