

It is not possible to over-rate the importance of the question involved in the suspension of the Rev. Mr. Prime. It is avowedly a complete absorption by the Bishop of the individual liberty of the clergy, against which all sensible men should unite, whatever their church politics may be. A foolish low-churchman may glory in the suspension of Mr. Prime as a party triumph; but every man of reflection will observe that it is something more, and that the tyrannical act of a fanatical low-church Bishop may be quoted as a very convenient precedent by some fanatical high-church Bishop elsewhere. People who studiously avoid using the argument, will console themselves silently with the idea that there is no danger in that quarter, that there is no fear in our day of any Bishop's omnipotence. They flatter themselves that, imitating Bishop Oxenden, Bishops will only venture on such perilous proceedings when they feel secure that the arbitrary act is agreeable to the wishes of a powerful faction. So long as the short-sighted dreamer is a unit of such a faction he may have some cause for so consoling himself; but it is not easy to believe that a community pretending to exist under the sanction of moral and religious law can generally take so common. I had almost said so base, a view of the subject. Churchmen generally desire to know on what ground such a suspension took place, and whether the grounds can be generalized; in other words whether it is an isolated and arbitrary act, or an act which can be justified on principle. If the former it must be condemned; if the latter, it must be approved. So strongly was I impressed with the apparent injustice of the proceeding that so far back as the 14th of July, I addressed a letter to the Bishop, telling him how the matter struck me, and begging of him to re-consider his decision. To this letter I received an answer thanking me for writing to him on the subject, and expressing the "hope that when I had an opportunity of looking calmly at the whole question I would exonerate him (the Bishop) of all blame." As the only justification of the suspension contained in the Bishop's answer to me is to be found in the following sentence, it will be seen that the Bishop, either by design or inadvertence, failed to