

my Lord, these men will not flatter. They will endure all you can conceive, and your myrmidons inflict. With the example of their martyred ancestors before them, they will resign themselves without a murmur to the sacrifice. It may, however, be prudent to pause even at the threshold of the act. My Lord, this is not the age for persecution. We are an intelligent people, and are sensitively alive to all injustice. To attempt persecution on account of religion may gratify a party, but the gratification may be purchased by the stability of the empire. Measures of this character stamp the country where they are perpetrated, with eternal infamy. They are the materials with which history builds her great edifice. Pause, then, my Lord, I beseech you, before you prove to the world that in England the freedom of religious opinion is checked, that the liberty of conscience is penal, and that her Church is sustained by the elements of *fulmen brutum*. Let us not forget our dignity as a nation and a church, by any act unworthy of one or the other. If the Papacy be instituted by human wisdom, she will fall; within her own bosom she will bear the seeds of dissolution and decay; if our Church is of God and truth, what can we have to fear from such an establishment? Fear, my Lord, argues an ignoble mind; let us, therefore, remove its evidences by ceasing to exhibit our paroxysms and contortions. Besides, whom have we to fear? A few Roman Catholic Bishops and Priests, whose united followers do not constitute a decimal part of our population!

Really, my Lord, the idea is so absurd, that it would indicate an absence of respect were I to attempt to refute it. The law benches are Protestant—the Parliament is Protestant—the army is Protestant—the navy is Protestant—all England is Protestant—and yet our Prime Minister states that because a handful of Bishops have taken their titles from their places of residence, the law shall be examined! Is this madness, or meanness, or what is it? My Lord, I am bold but I cannot help it. The cause more than justifies me. See you not that your threats will strengthen the Church of the Papacy; that notwithstanding the wealth of the country, the influence of our Church, and the power of the state, the Papacy is progressing so rapidly that you find it is necessary to enact laws to arrest her progress? Rest assured my Lord, no law can enchain the mind, however it may punish its expression. Religion is a spirituality, which it is not in the power of parliaments to annihilate. Beware, then, how you presume to lay hands upon this sacred thing. Elevate yourself above all unworthy offices. My Lord, the Church of England is not in danger; and if the ark of truth were to totter, it should not be sustained by the unholy hand that has written, it may be, the proscription of millions. O! how have you fallen from your high state! O! the narrow dimensions to which a wretched fanaticism has reduced you! You have done what neither Fox nor Pitt would have dared to do; what the eloquence of Burke would have clothed with awful responsibility, what the judgment of Canning would have shunned, and the genius of Peel would have spurned as a mindless ambition. Supported by an active bigotry, and the refined ingenuity of Episcopal malice, you thus stand isolated from every thing that dignifies the character of a British statesman. The base minds that cheer you, and the speculating sycophants that do your beck, will die with the cause that produced them. But with you, my Lord, it is not so. An unenviable distinction is yours. Already has history claimed you for her own, and she will transmit you to posterity as the man who entered the temple of the constitution, and dared to snatch from her hallowed altar the fire of 'civil and religious liberty.'

I have the honor to be, my Lord, your Lordship's obedient and humble servant,
Tirvington, near Durham, 1st Dec., 1850.

HEBER PLAYFAIR.