

BALTIMORE, Feb. 9th, 1852.

Rt. Rev. and Dear Sir,—

Your favour of the 3rd of Dec. is before me. Its tone of mingled courtesy, and superciliousness served only to excite a smile, but shall not provoke me to the utterance of a sentence disrespectful to my ecclesiastical superior. The answer which I now send you, has in part been written some weeks, but numerous engagements have prevented my copying it.

Your observation concerning "the delicacy and propriety of my resort to your correspondence with the Vestry of Christ Church," renders it proper for me to say, that the extracts in my former letter, on this subject, were taken from the public records of the Vestry of Christ Church, Baltimore. Of course your exception has no force.

Alluding to the interview held at your house on the evening of July 26, 1842, you state, "Now, there was surely some object of the interview. What was it, what could it be, but to learn, whether there were any grounds or reasons for modification of my previously formed conclusion?" As you here admit the very point for which I quoted from the public records of Christ Church, viz., that you had "previously formed your conclusion" and had thus so far as you were concerned, "declined" the invitation to Christ Church, I have no occasion to say anything further on this head: since, if you had, previously to seeing me, formed your "conclusion" to decline, it is not easy to conceive how you could still have the subject of "acceptance under consideration," as you stated you had in a former communication.

But then, you now tell me, "surely there was some object in that interview," &c. Mark, how the case stands! Your own "conclusion" was formed previously to seeing me, you declare you arrived at it "on grounds independently" of the interview. What then could have been the object of this interview? Your refusal of the invitation to the Rectorship of Christ Church was concluded. You informed me of the same. I then stated to you that I had concluded to accept the invitation. Then ensued the conversation relating to the Lecture Room services of Christ Church, Baltimore; when you urged your opinions on the same, and when I declined agreeing with you, on the grounds previously stated, you emphatically charged irregularity. I plead the contrary, and cited practice and usage, and declared that I could not consent to a change which would be a reflection on my brother's ministry and also on my own. Here your object becomes manifest. You sought to obtain from me a promise to forego that mode of conducting our Lecture Room services, which my brother, (now the assistant Bishop of the Diocese of Virginia,) had found so useful, and to which you had reasons to suppose I was attached. You were anxious to revolutionize the whole character of these Lecture Room services, and, as you expressed yourself, make Christ Church "a model Church." Thinking this Church was a tolerably fair model already, and not fond of novelties, I concluded to follow as nearly as I could in the footsteps of my predecessor, at least until I saw some better way, which, after twenty-five years of ministerial labour, I have never yet found.

I think it is now more than ever apparent that your statements in your letter of Oct. 24th, in which you say, the invitation to the Rectorship of Christ Church was "still under consideration" at the time of our interview, and the facts, as proved by the records of Christ Church, and admitted by your letter of Dec. 3d, are utterly at variance; whilst "the motive" which prompted you to solicit that interview at your house, on the 26th of July, 1842, is apparent. I now declare that I regard that procedure on your part, in its "grounds," "reasons," and character—in its reflections on the ministry of my predecessor and in its attempt to embarrass my own, and in contemplation of my transfer within your jurisdiction, as one of the most extraordinary—to say no more—that I have ever known, as happening in the conduct of any Bishop of this Church. I feel wounded, even at this distance of time, in having been made the subject of such an

attempt, and I must frankly confess, that understood, as this matter now is in the admissions of your last letter, I consider your conduct on that occasion at your house, as having been a most ungracious return for the courtesy done you by myself, in thus coming to Baltimore and waiting upon you at your own particular request. You had, in advance, disposed of the call of the Vestry; I was, however, to be tampered with, and my predecessor struck at, over my head, by the charge of "irregularity" in his ministrations! Strange proceeding—and in my humble judgment utterly unjustifiable, call it by what terms you may.

Referring to my letter of Dec. 2nd, you correct an impression to which I referred doubtfully, as you will see by my language. Not having been present at the consecration of the Right Rev. John Johns, D. D., in Richmond, I was not positive as to the exact part you took in that sermon, and hence alluded to it as such. My language was, "You were, I believe, one of his presentors at his consecration to the Episcopate, and did him the kindness to preach the sermon on that occasion." The third and fourth words in this sentence—the same which I now underscore—show that this particular statement partakes somewhat of the nature of an inquiry. A glance at my language relieves both it and myself from all anxiety or any injury from your disparaging remark, in reference to a distrust of my recollection of the events. In matters of doubtful belief I am very careful always to express such doubt, especially in cases of reliance upon mere reports from others. Pardon me for being apprehensive that you did intentionally cause much inconvenience to yourself, by seeming to act on the very opposite rule, as for instance, in your late correspondence with the Rev. William Goode of England.

I now infer, from your correction of the latter incident, for which I thank you, that you admit the former, viz., that you were one of the presentors of the Rev. John Johns, D. D., at his consecration; as this, if it be so—and it is presumed that it was—is sufficient for my purpose, I dispense with the other incidents. All I wished was to prove that you co-operated in the consecration of the clergyman to the Episcopate, whom by direct implication you charged in my presence with being irregular in his ministerial services. Surely, after this, you can never again be so intensely vigilant as to extend your supervision beyond the clergy of your own Diocese, and solicit interviews with them at your own house, affectionately admonishing them on the subject of apprehended irregularity.

Your efforts to evade the facts cited by myself to show your most unkind and oppressive interference with several of your clergy, as stated in my former correspondence with you, are only naked assertions of your own views of the course of your official conduct. I have been connected with this Diocese, as one of its presbyters, something like twenty years, a period of time considerably more extended than your Episcopate, and have lived under two of your predecessors in that high office, and never have I known such extraordinary exercise of authority, and such painful disregard of the feelings of the clergy, as I have witnessed during the last nine years. In the instance of the Rev. Mr. Robbins, cited in my last letter, and also in my own case, you have acted as if it were a slight affair to threaten and also to present to the Standing Committee your unhappy presbyters who differ with you on points of admitted doubtfulness. It is true, in your letter to Mr. Robbins, you speak of "the trouble and disgrace" of a public trial; but you evidently rush into such proceedings—witness your late attempt against myself—as if they were of little consequence. I speak with strong emotion on this subject. Twice have I been thus "harrassed" by yourself; and, in the last instance, was kept waiting for weeks in a state of no very agreeable suspense, not being by you apprised of the action of the Standing Committee, and only knowing that you had formally presented me. So easily may the character of a minister of the gospel be stained, and rumour, with her hundred tongues, set in motion against us, that I regard it as a serious in-

jury, even to appear on the records of a Standing Committee, as charged with being a violator of the godly order of this Church. It is not proper for any clergyman to arrest disciplinary process: but I must avail myself of this occasion to implore you, at least, to acquaint yourself with the facts of the several cases which may come before you, which, it is evident, both in Mr. Robbins' instance and my own, you did not: and also never to present a presbyter for doing that which in your own words is "an admitted liberty." To resort to the "trouble and disgrace" of a public trial in such cases, merely to fix a limit to an "admitted liberty," as you call it, is a refinement of cruelty of which I am sure no well regulated or generous mind could be guilty. Ministerial character, dearer to us than life itself, is not, cannot be safe where such practices are permitted. Beneath a government of law we are safe, but not otherwise. Laws constructively extorted by severe judicial processes—in other words, the decrees of courts obtained as in the case of the Rev. Joseph Trapnell, may be easily made the very worst instruments of oppression. From such calamities may God in mercy save this Church, and especially from the consolidation of the executive, legislative and judicial power in one man. The best of men are too fond of power. Wise legislation will not seek to inflate this native propensity, but rather to restrain and abate it.

I now approach a part of your letter, which involves a very grave matter. Alluding to my "statement," "relative to occurrences in Christ Church and in Frederick," you observe: "your allegation of inconsistency, between statements made in the General Convention of 1850," (which were made by you in the House of Bishops,) "and the recollections and representations of others on the subject of certain alleged claims, against which you and others presented a memorial to that Convention, induces me now to repeat distinctly the declaration, that I have not at any time asserted my official right to read the Declaration of Absolution, when morning or evening prayer was said by a presbyter in my presence: but have uniformly declared, that having established and long continued the usage before any opposition was set up, I was willing, (though fully believing the Bishop to have the right to take any part of the service at his visitation,) for the sake of those who pleaded conscientious scruples, to accept it as a courtesy, and accordingly asked it as such." The misapprehensions of yourself and others, must have originated in my assertion of the right of the Bishop at his visitation, to read the whole service himself, if he should so choose; a right which I suppose never to have been disputed or doubted.

If this language were not in your own hand-writing and over your own signature, before me, I should be disposed to doubt it, as coming from you. How you can allow yourself so to speak is perfectly unaccountable to me. Observe, then, your inaccuracy in statement of fact, and mark! not a thing heard from others, and in reference to which you might be mistaken, but a matter which came before you officially, as a member of the House of Bishops, and which closely and particularly affected yourself! You say, referring to the memorial from Maryland, that "I and others presented" it. Now, turn to your copy of the Journal of the General Convention, and find my name, if you can, as one of the signers of that document.

But 2ndly. You say, "the right of the Bishop at his visitation to read the whole service himself, if he should so choose," you suppose has never "been doubted or disputed."

Why, over and above the decided resistance made to this claim by you, asserted in the presence of the Rev. W. N. Pendleton and myself, at visitations of our respective Churches, as before stated to you, see you not in the action of the last General Convention on the alterations proposed in the Canon on Episcopal visitations, something more than a doubt; yes, a negative of this claim? I copy from page 41 of the Journal.

The following proposed Canon of Episcopal visitations was presented. I quote but the first section:—

"I. Every Bishop of this Church shall

visit the Churches within its Diocese, for the purpose of examining the state of the Church, inspecting the behaviour of his Clergy, preaching, administering the sacraments, ordaining and officiating in the apostolic rite of confirmation. Such visitations may be made as often as once in each year to each Church, and oftener, if the minister of the Church request. And it is deemed proper that such visitations be made once in three years at least, by every Bishop to every Church within his Diocese. The control of the public services at the time of such visitations, shall be subject to the direction of the Bishop. At all other times, the minister of such congregation shall control the public services of the Church of which he has the charge, subject to the rubrics and canons of this Church."

Mark the sentence which I have underscored. Its paternity! who can doubt? This sweeping annihilation of the true and proper position of the presbyters of this Church, embodies and declares, most fully and faithfully, your idea of Episcopal consolidated power, and reduces the body of presbyters to a mere deputy of the Bishop. Instead of passing this section, however, we rejoice, on reading on page 185, among other sentences in the Journal of 1850 before cited, the following language, offered by Bishop Meade, moved by Bishop Melville, and seconded by Bishop Potter: "Whereas, it is in accordance with the mild spirit of our holy religion and the wise moderation of our Church, not to legislate on doubtful points without great and sufficient reasons; and whereas, there are many who would feel aggrieved by any legislation which would either enforce or deny the disputed rights referred to by the memorialists, and whereas, the Bishop of Maryland has declared that the only claim he asserts is the right of administering the holy communion in each parish, at his regular visitations, and that he has ever been ready to arrange his visitations so as not to interfere with the known wishes and conscientious objections of those who are opposed to the claim asserted—Therefore resolved," &c. Here, surely, the record tells us of "doubt and dispute," whilst the terms of the proposed canon speak for increased power.

You know the result. The Convention struck out of this proposed canon every clause save to authorise the Bishop "to minister the word, and, if he think fit, the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper," not to "control the services," but "to minister the word." Now this decided objection to pass the proposed canon as originally drawn, and this imposing of the added clauses, as above expressed, together with the language used by Bishops Meade, Melville and Potter, surely do more than demonstrate the existence of "doubts," in regard to your alleged and asserted rights and claims for the Bishop to not merely "control" the services at a visitation, but actually supersede the Rector Presbyter, for the time being, and engross, not by "courtesy," but by law, the whole service.

With these recorded facts before you, the language of your letter of Dec. 3, 1851, is most extraordinary.

I conclude by quoting as coincident testimony to the close and literal truth of my former statements on this subject, the language of the Rev. W. N. Pendleton, whose case I presented for your consideration in my last communication to you.

"I affirm," writes Mr. Pendleton, "that he, (the Bishop, referring to yourself,) has again and again, relentlessly pressed the points of the Absolution and of the whole service, not only by words, but by actions. And in proof I refer you in brief to documents published by me in the Protestant Churchman of May 17th, 1851."

I here solemnly re-affirm the same declaration, made in my last letter, touching the same subject, and I am ready before any tribunal of this Church, to give my open testimony to the point made before the House of Bishops, and reiterated in this correspondence with the facts at issue. Sacred truth and ministerial character are now implicated, and ought to be vindicated, or we shall all suffer.

This is a painful position between a Bishop and two of his senior Presbyters; but your declarations, oral and written, have