

**THE CASE OF THE REV. MR.
SHORE: A LETTER TO HIS
GRACE THE ARCHBISHOP
OF CANTERBURY**

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The Case of the Rev. Mr. Shore: A Letter to His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry
Lord Bishop of Exeter

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HENRY LORD BISHOP OF EXETER

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A LETTER

TO

HIS GRACE

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY,

BY

HENRY, LORD BISHOP OF EXETER.

LONDON:

JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1849.

A L E T T E R,

§c. §c.

MY LORD ARCHBISHOP,

Bishopstowe, March 28, 1849.

THE great excitement which has been caused by the case of the REV. JAMES SHOBE, and the introduction into the House of Commons of a Bill, which is likely soon to reach the Upper House, in consequence of that excitement, have made me deem it expedient to state publicly the real facts of the case itself; and I know not any more proper mode of executing this purpose, than by making the statement, as your Grace has permitted me to do, in this public letter addressed to my Metropolitan.

Before, however, I commence this statement, I rejoice to be able to say that your Grace, as well as myself, is entirely disposed to favour and support any well-considered measure (as the Bill now before the House of Commons must be expected to be) for relieving any Clergyman who, after he has been admitted to Holy Orders in the Church, shall conceive conscientious scruples against a continuance in its communion. So far indeed from wishing to chain to the service of the altar any whose conscience bids them renounce that service, the true Churchman would urge them, rather, quietly to withdraw, than to persist in the performance of offices which they can no longer perform

without peril to their own souls, and a serious offence to the souls of others.

I have myself, on more than one occasion, acted on this principle, and I have had the satisfaction of receiving from the parties concerned an earnest expression of their thankfulness for the kindness and forbearance with which I parted from them.

If Mr. Shore had testified a similar feeling of conscientious objection to a continuance in our Communion, he would have experienced from me a similar respect for his feelings, and a similar desire to afford every facility to his departure.

That very different was the nature of his case, and very different the duty imposed by it on myself, will, I think, be manifest from the facts which, without further preface, I proceed to narrate.

But, in order to a clear understanding of the matters which relate specially to Mr. Shore, it is necessary that I first explain at some length the position which he occupied, and which brought him within the indispensable exercise of the discipline of the Church. If this cannot be done without stating facts which may be deemed to affect a nobleman of the highest rank, of advanced age, and now unfortunately in very impaired health, while I lament the necessity, I have the satisfaction of knowing that it has been imposed upon me by the proceedings of others.

In the summer of the year 1832, his Grace the Duke of Somerset requested me to meet him at Bridgetown, a hamlet of the parish of Berry Pomeroy, recently made part of the borough of Totness, in which his Grace had much improved the size and quality of the houses, and had erected a building designed to be its Church. The Duke was desirous of knowing what

must be done in order to his obtaining the consecration of the building.

I informed his Grace that the object might be effected in one of two ways; either by the building being made a chapel-of-ease to the church of Berry Pomeroy, or by its being endowed as the chapel of a district to be taken out of the parish: that in the former case, the duty of providing for the service of the chapel, and the consequent right of nominating the minister, would belong to the vicar; but that in the latter case, the Duke might acquire the right of patronage by making an endowment.

His Grace, having first expressed his fixed resolution to take such a course as should secure to himself the right of nominating the minister, declined coming to an immediate decision respecting the endowment to be made for that purpose; but he shortly afterwards instructed his solicitor, Mr. Maberley, to communicate with my secretary, Mr. Barnes, who was duly authorized on my part.

The following are the main particulars of the correspondence which ensued between those gentlemen.

Extracts from Correspondence previous to the Bishop granting his Licence for the Opening of Bridgetown Chapel.

No. 1.

Mr. Maberley to Mr. Barnes.—August 18, 1832.

I am directed by the Duke of Somerset to put myself in communication with you on the subject of the Consecration of the Chapel lately built by his Grace at Bridgetown. His Grace has made known to me the very satisfactory interviews that have taken place between the Bishop and him, and his Grace's conviction that the Bishop and yourself are disposed to facilitate his views, so far as may consistently be done.

The Duke was not aware, I find, that it would be necessary for him, in order to consecration and licence, to establish an *endowment to such extent* as seems necessary. The Duke is, as you are aware, the patron of the living, and a *firm friend of the Church Establishment*, nor do I think it at all likely that the chapel would ever go out of his family. Under these circumstances I confess that I *am inclined to recommend* his Grace to keep his new building, at any rate for the present, *as a proprietary chapel*. I believe, but in this you can set me right, that all that will be required in *such case* will be for his Grace to request a licence of the Bishop for the minister who may officiate, and that the Incumbent of the Parish give his sanction.

No. 2.

Mr. Barnes to Mr. Maberley.—August 27, 1832.

Has consulted the Bishop on the subject.

“The Duke may, perhaps, be under the impression that a larger endowment was required than the Bishop would deem necessary for consecration. The Bishop, considering the liberal intention of his Grace with regard to the ultimate provision for the minister, would only consider it necessary to require to have legally secured on land, or money charged or secured on land, or money in the funds, a stipend of 50*l.* a year.

“The Bishop, on hearing your proposal to license the chapel, at present only as a proprietary chapel, desires me to say that *he has a strong disinclination to a licence of that description*. The Bishop hopes that the Duke will be able to make at once an arrangement satisfactory to himself for endowment and consecration.”

No. 3.

Mr. Maberley to Mr. Barnes.—August 31, 1832.

Refers to the Statute 1 & 2 Wm. IV. cap. 38.

“I apprehend that *the sole objects of the Duke are, to have the chapel consecrated, to retain the sole patronage, and to give a competent stipend by pew-rents or OTHERWISE, or both, to the minister for the time being*. I am well assured that in the attainment of these objects his Grace is most anxious to pursue the course which the interests of the Establishment most require, and consequently of which the Bishop should approve.”

No. 4.

Mr. Barnes to Mr. Maberley.—September 8, 1832.

Refers to the Statute 1 & 2 Wm. IV. as not applicable to the case, unless through the Church Building Commissioners. "The Bishop, however, looks only to the endowment mentioned, and is ready to do everything that may be in his power to carry into effect the purposes of the Duke, as expressed by you."

No. 5.

Mr. Maberley to Mr. Barnes.—September 14, 1832.

I begin to apprehend that the *mutual objects of the Duke of Somerset and the Bishop* will not be attainable but through the Church Building Commissioners. It will require some consideration to determine what proposition to lay before them. It may also turn out that the Duke's apprehension of its being necessary to let a twelve-month to go round is well founded; and this would be much waste of time, and the chapel is ready, I believe. It seems to me also, that it might assist the Duke in determining definitively what he may be inclined to do, relative to the endowment, &c., if an experiment could be first made how the chapel is likely to answer. Under these considerations, I would beg to suggest whether it would be better to request of the Bishop in the first instance a licence, as if it were a proprietary chapel only, which need not by any means imply thereby that the idea of endowment and consecration is abandoned. The opening of the chapel in this way will, in the course of a few months, probably enable the Duke to judge what may be the best arrangement to propose for the ultimate adjustment.

No. 6.

Mr. Barnes to Mr. Maberley.—September 19, 1832.

The Bishop directs me to say that the Duke of Somerset having stated his wish and purpose to endow the chapel, and convey the same for consecration, the Bishop will license the chapel till that purpose can be conveniently carried into effect.

"It is only necessary that the Duke should sign a petition, and *I will draw a form and send to you.*"

Asking for a plan of the chapel, and *to be assured that the Duke is seized in fee.*