

**SOME REMARKS ON THE ESSAY  
BY DR. LIGHTFOOT NOW  
LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM  
ON THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY**

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Some Remarks on the Essay by Dr. Lightfoot Now Lord Bishop of Durham on the Christian Ministry by Charles Wordsworth

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**CHARLES WORDSWORTH**

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SOME REMARKS  
ON THE ESSAY BY DR. LIGHTFOOT  
NOW LORD BISHOP OF DURHAM

ON

THE CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

WITH REFERENCE ESPECIALLY  
TO THE PRESBYTERIAN FORMULA OF SUBSCRIPTION  
REQUIRED AT ORDINATION OF MINISTERS AND ELDERS  
AND TO DEAN STANLEY'S SERMON PREACHED AT GLASGOW  
ON "THE BURNING BUSH."

BY

CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.C.L.

*Bishop of St. Andrews  
and Fellow of Winchester College*

ἀμφὸν γὰρ ἔσται φίλου, ὅσον προτιμᾷ τὴν ἀλήθειαν.  
Arist. De. Socr. et. Plat. lib. i. c. 2.



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### ADVERTISEMENT.

It will not, I hope, be considered inconsistent with the highest respect and esteem, due personally and officially to the distinguished Scholar and Divine who now occupies the See of Durham, if I have thought it better in the following pages to designate him not by his Episcopal Title, but simply as Dr. Lightfoot. The 'Essay' was written more than ten years before he was elevated to the Episcopate—a fact of which it is desirable that the reader should be kept in mind; and though I have no actual reason to suppose that the Bishop's opinions have undergone any change or modification during that long and important interval, in which his continued and deeper studies upon the same early period of Ecclesiastical History have proved of such valuable service to the cause of our Holy Religion, it would not be fair or right to assume the contrary, and so to grant the full weight of high Episcopal sanction claimed for the teaching of the Essay, without clear and decisive evidence to that effect. I will merely add here, that if in the course of my 'Remarks' any word has escaped me by which I may seem to have forgotten for the moment the friendly relations in which I have been permitted to stand towards the distinguished individuals whose names occur most prominently in the

following pages, I should wish it *withdrawn* as quite unintentional, and shall greatly regret that my vigilance has not sufficed to prevent its intrusion. It will not, however, I trust, be imputed to me either as an unfriendly act, or as an act of undue presumption, if, after the publication of their sentiments, I have felt it necessary to reiterate and defend my own, published very widely many years before; which are in fact no other than those confessedly held hitherto by all the great Divines of the Church of England.

*St. Andrews, July 21, 1879.*



## SOME REMARKS

ON

### DR. LIGHTFOOT'S ESSAY.

THE use that has been made, more or less directly, of Dr. Lightfoot's *Essay on the Christian Ministry*, especially since his elevation to the Episcopate, in order to support the interests of *Presbyterianism*, and still more perhaps of *Indifferentism*, renders it desirable that its real teaching should be brought more fully and accurately under public notice; and I venture to hope that the attempt which I am now to make with that object in view may be found acceptable to many, and not least to the distinguished Author himself, who will welcome, I am sure, any careful and candid effort to defend and maintain *the interests of Truth* which, in all that he has written, he has endeavoured to promote.

I have said that the Essay in question has been used in the interests not only of *Presbyterianism* but of *Indifferentism*; which latter has now become the favourite view of all the more learned and more eminent Presbyterians in Scotland, and I suppose of some of the more extreme Broad Churchmen in England. But it is not against the latter so much as against the former that my

remarks will be directed; because I have to remember that whatever may be the private sentiments of individuals, the Presbyterian *formula* of subscription required at Ordination obliges all Ministers to declare their persuasion that the Presbyterian Church Government is 'founded upon the word of God, and agreeable thereto'; and also obliges them, and all Lay Elders, to promise that they 'will submit thereto, concur therewith, and never endeavour, directly or indirectly, the prejudice or subversion thereof.' And further, I have to remember that all attempts to relax even the Elders' formula have hitherto been resisted with complete success; whereas the Anglican Churches, who might make such a requirement in behalf of their own system with truth and justice, forbear to do so.

First, then, let me show, in part at least, that the necessity for these *Remarks* exists, and how it has arisen.

My friend the Dean of Westminster—and I cannot forget that it was at his hospitable Deanery I first had the honour of making the acquaintance of the eminent scholar and divine over whose evidence and authority the present discussion is to be raised—in a sermon which he preached some months ago (March 27) at Glasgow before a large Presbyterian audience, on occasion of the anniversary Festival of the Society of the Sons of Ministers of the Church of Scotland, and which he has since published under the title of 'The Burning Bush,' expressed himself as follows:

'There was a time when it used to be the prevailing belief of English divines that Episcopacy, in the sense of

the necessity of one presiding officer over every Christian community, reached back to the very first origin of the Christian Society. This belief, in the enlarged atmosphere of more exact scholarship and more enlightened candour, has now been abandoned. The most learned of all the living Bishops of England, whose accession to the great See of Durham has been recently welcomed by the whole Church of England with a rare unanimity and enthusiasm, has, with his characteristic moderation and erudition, proved beyond dispute in a celebrated essay attached to his edition of "St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians," that the early constitution of the Apostolic Churches of the first century was not that of a single Pastor, but of a body of Pastors indifferently styled "Bishops" or "Presbyters"; that it was not till the very end of the Apostolic age that the office which we now call the Episcopate, gradually and slowly made its way in the Churches of Asia Minor; that Presbytery was not a later growth out of Episcopacy, but that Episcopacy was a later growth out of Presbytery; that the office which the Apostles adopted was a rule not of Bishops but of Presbyters; and that even down to the fourth century presbyters as well as bishops possessed the power of nominating and consecrating bishops.

'The feeling which led to this primitive equality amongst the ministers of the Gospel did not altogether lose its expression, when, owing to that natural development of Christian civilization to which I before referred, there arose the various gradations of the Christian hierarchy. Not only were the bishops of the second and third