

2. To the Rev. H. E. Manning.

CARLTON GARDENS,  
Sunday Evening,  
April 2, 1837.

MY DEAR MANNING,

. . . I am prompted to return to . . . that hard and formidable question which must not be evaded, how the principle of Catholic Christianity is to be applied in these evil and presumptuous days to the conduct of public affairs. Of the mere enunciation of these principles I have said something already, but I now inquire of myself in what way they are to be embodied in the administration of government. I look to Ireland — Maynooth stares me in the face. I look to Canada and I find the House of Assembly in the Upper Province are about passing a Bill to apply the proceeds of the clergy reserves to the endowment of the following sects or bodies: Church of England, Church of Scotland, Church of Rome, Wesleyan Methodist, Baptist. I look to the West Indies and I find the money given for the religious education of the people is receivable by all Protestant societies alike. Lastly, I look to Australia and I find there what threatens to become an avowed and systematic adoption of the principle of concurrent endowment for the two Established and the Romish Churches, along with other apparently indiscriminating aid to various separatists.

This is a formidable state of things, is it not? If the Government is to be merely the exponent of the will of these various sections of the people, then it is well. But if the very idea of Government be debased by supposing that it is only to be actuated by and not also to actuate the people; if a national Church ought to be supported for the sake of that Truth which it embodies and propounds; if *unity in that Truth* be the genuine end of all human life, and of human society inclusively; and if the corrupt bias of nature, away from unity, require the counteracting force of laws, institutions, and authorities, to neutralize its mischievous effects — then what shall we say to these things? Are we to support all forms of religion? No, one will say, but all forms of Christianity. What, those which by retaining the name seem but to



aggravate their awful rejection of the substance of revealed truth? Another then will give up the Unitarians, or say we have no such sect calling out for endowment in Ireland or the Colonies. Well, then, shall the Government pay the priest on this side of the road to denounce and anathematize its own faith, still its own predominating faith, taught on the other? Shall our Church colonists and our Romish colonists thus draw from the same source the means of contradicting one another, and of rending (not to inquire now *who* rend) the body of Christ? If so, then why is not this principle applied to Ireland? Plead the Act of Union forsooth against a people, against the millions crying out for spiritual instruction and food! For if the Roman Catholic religion be spiritual food, which we with a safe conscience can administer, then I say Ireland is the place of all others which has the strongest claim. I need not proceed one step farther, and put the case where it is proposed to endow only the Established Churches and the Protestant sects termed 'orthodox.' But I ask this question. Is the adoption of any one of the principles of these several cases compatible with any true notion, I say not of the functions of Government, which are very secondary in *comparison*, but of a National Church, or with the reasonable anticipation of blessing from on high? Shall we, if the thing be unfit in itself for *home* Government — shall we, as regards the Colonies, be absolved by the consideration that the funds are generally drawn from themselves, and not from us? I can find no answer to any of these questions which admits of an acquiescence in the modes of proceeding which I have recounted.

Let me, however, say this: After considering the question of the Scotch Church, I am of opinion that it ought to receive a *bona-fide* support from the Government abroad as it does at home and I do not, therefore, stand upon the basis of the Apostolical Succession for the administration of Government as I would for my own individual conduct. In adopting this particular limit, not the most satisfactory or rather pleasing to my own mind, I am supported by the belief that we thus may hope to secure the promulgation of a definite body of Christian truth, made operative,



as I see experimentally in Scotland, in a manner that indicates Divine Grace, and endowed, as it appears, with some principles of permanence as well as vitality.

But now, for the sake of simplicity, to take the case of Maynooth: how is it possible to remain in the present practice with a good conscience? If we teach the teachers, why not teach the hearers too? If we teach either, do we not *ipso facto* surrender that great idea, that good idea, of a National Church which was born with the Reformation and gradually developed in the succeeding generations? I understand that idea as having involved the following assertions: that the Church and the nation ought to be co-extensive and under one visible head; that the visible head was competent, and was bound, to lead the people to the truth; but that it was limited in the use of means by a consideration of the subject-matter, Truth, which does not admit of inculcation by force. That headship was in the King personally, and its functions are exercised by the Government of which he is not only the apex but the origin. If two religions be established, one of which utterly excommunicates the other, while the other gravely alleges against the first that by her false interpolations she hazards the very life of the Truth, what has become of that competency, of that obligation? What has become of the character of a Governor? Will not a man whose desire it is while alive to be dead, and to have his life hid with Christ in God, will he not fly from political functions as from pitch, and desire to be free in the narrowest circle rather than fettered and motionless in the widest, to be free, acting for himself, to act for God, rather than to be invested with powers and attributes which he may not use for the only end that can permanently bless them?

These are subjects that press upon my heart with a weight indescribable. It is so clear that all other things must be sold in order to secure the pearl of great price, that the light of the proposition forces itself into eyes ever so obstinately closed. And I know not how any man of conscience could become a politician, when that walk of life has become the only one in which a man may not avail himself of the opportunities



placed within his hands for promoting the glory of God. It may be said the opportunities were *once* within the hands of the political man, but under the new principles of government they are so no longer. I am not sure of that, and if I were, still I say, that being the case, is the business of government the one in which the children of the Church can any longer take delight? Where is the sweetening compensation for all the cares and excitements of public life, and even for its terrific drain upon the sympathies and the affections of the heart? Even the glorious hope of being enabled by working at the sources of the nation's life to do some good there which shall flow through a thousand channels and give a greater effect to Truth than can be given by the individual man, who works with his single arm, whereas the governor touches the spring which moves a multitude of instruments. Or lastly, if it be still in doubt whether the character of government be any longer paternal, or only ministerial, shall we lend our concurrence to a course of action which, only continued for a certain period, will permanently affix to it the latter character, and utterly erase all traces of the former?

There may seem to be great affectation in speaking of these duties and responsibilities of governors as affecting myself, but yet they do affect me, though on a scale infinitely reduced in proportion to my insignificance. They remain unchanged whatever be the diminution of the absolute quantities represented, like the fixed relations expressible in the fraction  $\frac{9}{10}$ . I must make up my mind upon them. Coming events cast their shadows before; those shadows are gigantic and gloomy, and I scarce know how to face them. The Conservative party in this country may long be spared accession to office — for as moral agents they might with some show of reason consider this an exemption, so fearful are the temptations to compromise of principle which resumption of the Government would bring with it in respect of the one thing needful. But, on the other hand, this searching trial may be imposed upon them suddenly and soon, and I would earnestly wish, with all the calmness of which the subject will allow, to sift and probe my own opinions to the very



bottom, to separate chimera from reality, to learn where to take a stand, and having taken to hold it. At least you will see that I have freely unbosomed myself to you. I desire to know how my thoughts are mirrored in minds purer than my own, and whether they come back to me attested or exposed. As a friend and as a minister of God, I am sure you will lend me what aid you may towards compromising everything that is not principle, and upholding everything that is. I am more anxious for the first than anything in the world, except the second. And more, I am sure that you will pray for us upon whom has fallen a task so infinitely beyond all human power. Not that there is cause to repine. God has richly blessed us, in giving us for our school of spiritual discipline a period and circumstances when everything that is precious is assailed, and is to be defended. But O that as our day is so may our strength be; that the men who are among us so highly endowed with integrity of character and honesty of conscience as well as with powerful talent and large experience may take their position upon the truth of God and abide by it to the last! Pray for them; and do not scorn to pray for me, whose need of grace is a thousandfold augmented as it has been forfeited a thousandfold by my life.

Believe me, my dear Manning,  
Yours truly attached,  
W. E. GLADSTONE.

3. *To the Rev. H. E. Manning.*

6, CARLTON GARDENS,  
Sunday Evening,  
April 23, 1837.

MY DEAR MANNING,

I gladly appropriate a peaceful hour to renewing the consideration of the great subjects to which your two as yet unacknowledged letters refer. . . .

I take first the case involving the smallest departure from the principle which I assume should regulate the individual conduct of a Churchman, and it is one immediately impending too: namely, that of a grant to the Scotch Church for the purpose of its extension among the uninstructed and untended population of that



that it had been brought there he had no doubt, and when non-Christians had a recognized and important share in the conduct of public affairs, nothing was to be gained by excluding them from Parliament. Accordingly, in 1847, the year of his first Oxford election, he spoke and voted for Lord John Russell's motion for the removal of Jewish disabilities. In the preface to the reprint of his speech he argued that, as the Jew had, from an alien, come to be a citizen, and, from a citizen having rights of person and property only, had come to be a citizen having access to the franchise, to the magistracy, and to municipal government, there could be no reason for keeping him out of Parliament, unless it were a religious reason. The opponents of the motion found this religious reason in the fact that the Legislature when it included Jews would be no longer Christian. But, in the highest sense of the word, this change had already been wrought. Members of Parliament had ceased, in that character, to 'profess a known and definite body of truth constituting the Christian faith.' Of the two remaining senses, one—that the members all call themselves Christians—was not worth preserving; the other—that Parliament contained a great preponderance of Christians—would not be in the least affected by the presence of a few Jews.

The letter to Bishop Blomfield (Letter 26) explains why Mr. Gladstone took no part in the controversy excited by Lord John Russell's appointment of Hampden to the See of Hereford. He was quite ready to 'use every effort' to make it impossible that a Bishop should again be thrust on an astonished Church by the mere will of the Prime Minister; but he was not disposed to do other men's work, or to lead where it was his place to follow. If the Church was to be saved

From D.C. Lathbury, *Correspondence on Church and Religion of W.E. Gladstone, vol I* (New York,

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from a possible repetition of this insult, it must be by the intervention of the Bishops. Mr. Gladstone leaves his correspondent in no doubt as to the mischiefs that will follow if the Bishops do nothing, but he is not inclined to save them from the consequences of their own timidity. There were other causes, possibly, that disposed him to leave the controversy alone. Hampden might be a heretic, but the reason why he was accounted one was the censure passed upon him by the University of Oxford in 1836. But on that occasion he had not had a fair trial. He had been condemned in general terms, but these terms 'did not really declare the point of imputed guilt.' Against such an indictment even perfect innocence could have no defence. The letter in which these words occur\* was not, it is true, written till 1856, but the conviction may well have been growing up in Mr. Gladstone's mind nine years earlier. Moreover, between 1836 and 1848 he had had, as we shall see in another chapter, abundant opportunities of estimating the fitness of the University authorities to be judges of heresy. In the controversy which comes next in the correspondence we shall find no similar lukewarmness on Mr. Gladstone's part.

#### 19. To Archdeacon Manning.

WHITEHALL,

January 30, 1845.

It is virtually all over and I am out, but, so far as this is concerned, with a clear judgment and a sound conscience. I am sure I should have broken 'the terms of my compact with public confidence'—'I thank thee for that word.' It might not have been discovered now, but my sin would have found me out

\* It is given by Lord Morley—Life, i. 124.



hereafter and at some vital moment, if I had, as a member of the Government, been party to a proposal reopening so much of the great question of Church and State—in principle almost reconstructing their relation for Ireland, and, depend upon it, seriously modifying the aspect of the case for England also.

Do you know that daily intercourse and co-operation with men upon matters of great anxiety and moment interweaves much of one's being with theirs, and parting with them, leaving them under the pressure of their work and setting myself free, feels, I think, much like dying—more like it than if I were turning my back altogether upon public life.

I have received great kindness, and, so far as personal sentiments are concerned, I believe they are as well among us as they can be. . . . Hope is wholly with me.

20. *To the Duke of Newcastle.*

WHITEHALL,

January 30, 1845.

MY DEAR LORD DUKE,

My obligations to your Grace on public and on personal accounts have made me anxious that you should receive from myself and not through public rumour the intelligence of my retirement from office. It has not yet taken formal effect, but it is finally decided on. A statement of this purport has appeared, no one knows how, in the *Times* of this morning, before any disclosure of the kind was intended by the parties principally concerned; but though in one sense premature, it is correct as to its substance with regard to me. I resign upon the ground that the opinions which I have published on the subject of the connection between the Church and the State render it improper for me to participate, as a member of the Administration, in some of the measures which, according to public anticipation, they are about to take with reference to Education in Ireland. But although it has seemed to me an imperative duty under my circumstances to secure the position in which I may form a presumably independent judgment upon matters of so much moment, I am bound to add that, adverting to the

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character of the times and of the religious and political sentiments which prevail, I can cast no blame upon Sir R. Peel and his colleagues either as individuals or as a Government on account of their intentions, so far as they are known to me, and my feelings of regard and attachment to them remain unaltered. Although my hope may have been frustrated, that I should be myself the bearer of the news, I thought it due to your Grace that you should be apprised of the facts in my own handwriting.

W. E. GLADSTONE.

21. *From the Rev. J. H. Newman to Mr. Gladstone.*

LITTLEMORE,

April 18, 1845.

MY DEAR MR. GLADSTONE,

I should not venture to inroach upon your time with this note of mine, but for your letters to me last autumn, which make me read with great interest, of course, everything which is in the papers about you, and encourage me to think that you will not think me intrusive.

As various persons ask me what I understand is your present position, I will put down what I conceive it to be; and I will beg you to correct my account of it just as much or just as little as you please, and to determine, as you think best, whether I shall say I have your authority for any statements you may kindly make in your answer or not.

Useless words always look cold and formal on paper. I should not think of saying (what I really hope it will not even come into your passing thoughts to doubt) how great interest I feel in the line of thought which is at present engaging your mind, and how sure I am you will be conducted to right conclusions. Nor is there anything to startle or distress me in what you are reported to have said in the House.

I say then: 'Mr. Gladstone has said the State *ought* to have a conscience—but it has not a conscience. Can *he* give it a conscience? Is he to impose his own conscience on the State? He would be very glad to do so, if it thereby would become the State's conscience. But that is absurd. He must deal with facts.



It has a thousand consciences, as being, in its legislative and executive capacities, the aggregate of a hundred minds—that is, it has no conscience.

'You will say, "Well, the obvious thing would be, if the State has not a conscience, that he should cease to be answerable for it." So he has—he has retired from the Ministry. While he thought he could believe it had a conscience—till he was forced to give up, what it was his duty to cherish as long as ever he could, the notion that the British Empire was a subject and servant of the Kingdom of Christ—he served the State. Now that he finds this to be a mere dream, much as it ought to be otherwise, much as it once was otherwise, he has said, "I cannot serve such a mistress."

'But really,' I continue, 'do you in your heart mean to say that he *should* absolutely and for ever give up the State and country? I hope not—I do not think he has so committed himself. That the conclusion he has come to is a very grave one, and not consistent with his going on blindly in the din and hurry of business, without having principles to guide him, I admit; and this I conceive is his reason for at once retiring from the Ministry, that he may contemplate the state of things calmly and from without. But I really cannot pronounce, nor can you, nor can he perhaps at once, what is a Christian's duty under these new circumstances—whether to remain in retirement from public affairs or not. Retirement, however, could not be done by halves. If he is absolutely to give up all management of public affairs, he must retire not only from the Ministry, but from Parliament.

'I see another reason for his retiring from the Ministry. The public thought they had in his book a pledge that the Government would not take such a step with respect to Maynooth as is now before the country. Had he continued in the Ministry, he would, to a certain extent, have been misleading the country.

'You say, "He made some show of seeing his way in future, for he gave advice. He said it would be well for all parties to yield something. To see his way and to give advice is as if he had found some principle to go on." I did not so understand him. I thought he distinctly stated he had not yet found

a principle, but he gave that advice which facts, or what he called circumstances, made necessary, and which, if followed out, will, it is to be hoped, lead to some basis of principle which we do not see at present.'

This letter has run to a greater length than I had expected, but I thought I would do my best to bring out the impression which your speech has given me of your meaning.

I am, my dear Mr. Gladstone,  
Very truly yours,  
JOHN H. NEWMAN.

22. To the Rev. J. H. Newman.

13, CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,  
April 19, 1845.

MY DEAR MR. NEWMAN,

You have expressed with great accuracy the view which I take of the question of Church and State as a whole, enveloping in it the particular question as to Maynooth that at present agitates England.

According to the old European and Christian civilization (to go no farther back), the State was a family, and the governors had the position and the duties of parents. According to the modern notion the State is a club; the Government is the organ of the influences predominating in the body. Where its spirit is hard, what has been called the tyranny of the majority rules with a high hand. Where its spirit is more gentle, as it can scarcely fail to be in every State founded upon the ancient basis, other sentiments entertained by bodies of sensible magnitude besides those of the mere majority find their way into and are represented in the action of the State.

With us the State is neither a family nor a club; but it is on its path of transition from the former to the latter. It is less like a club than America or than France: it is less like a family (I mean as to duties, not as to their fulfilment) than Austria or than Russia. The public men of the present day are—I must not conceal it from myself—engaged in regulating and qualifying, and some of them in retarding,



this transition. But the work proceeds; and as to that work regarded as a whole, and its results, I view them with great alarm.

The State cannot be said now to have a conscience, at least not by me, inasmuch as I think it acts, and acts wilfully, and intends to go on acting, in such a way as no conscience—that is, no personal conscience (which is the only real form of one)—can endure. But the State still continues to act in many ways *as if* it had a conscience. The Christian figure of our institutions still remains, though marred by the most incongruous associations. There are, therefore, actual relations of the State to Religion—I mean to determine religion—which still subsist and retain much vitality, and offer opportunities of good in proportion to it, however they may be surrounded with violent moral contradictions. For the sake of these opportunities I think that public life is tolerable, and in my case, as it at present stands, obligatory. But it is like serving for Leah afterwards to win Rachel.

I have clung to the notion of a conscience, and a Catholic conscience, in the State, until that idea has become in the general mind so feeble as to be absolutely inappreciable in the movement of public affairs. I do not know whether there is one man opposing the Maynooth Bill upon that principle. When I have found myself the last man in the ship, I think that I am free to leave it.

But some persons will say a principle is not to be regarded as a ship which may be left in extreme necessity; it is a witness for truth, and power and life belong to it as such. Then my answer is, I do not think that any theory of government is in this sense a principle. My language has always been, 'Here is the genuine and proper theory of government as to religion; hold it as long as you can, and as far as you can. Government must subsist; and if not as (in strictness) it ought, then as it may.'

At this point comes in the question whether the work of government has not therefore become absolutely unclean, and whether it should not be abjured. That is a very difficult question—I mean the first part of it. Upon the whole, for specific reasons, I have made up my mind in the negative—not with an entire

conviction, perhaps, but as the better of the two alternatives before me. But most emphatically do I agree with that sentence of your letter: retirement to have anything like its full meaning must be retirement from Parliament as well as office.

I am quite unable, I confess, to give any definition of the abstract character of the acts of a State while it is, like ours, in its course of transition. I understand that when it has come to be a club it acts like a clock—a good or a bad one as the case may be. When it was in its early and normal condition it acted, or should have acted, like a man, or even more like an archangel. In our case the ancient principle of reverence to truth, the supreme law of the State in its higher condition, is crossed and intercepted by the law of representation and equality of claims according to number and will—the supreme law of the State in its lower condition, when the hand of Death is palsying it by however slow degrees. In the sense, therefore, of incapacity to give a moral definition of acts in which I myself concur, I am at fault—a serious difficulty.

But as to the course which offers to my mind the only alternative other than that of retirement, I have framed my general idea of it. It is, in all those cases where the State acts *as if* it had a conscience, to maintain that standard as nearly as we can: and in other cases to take social justice according to the lower, but now prevalent, idea for a guide. 'A principle' I can hardly presume to call this. In the House of Commons there is, unfortunately, no word with which such liberties are taken. But it is a sort of general rule, though planted, I grant, upon ground infirm enough.

I do not know that I should have the least difficulty in subscribing your letter as it stands: and I could much rather say ditto to you than do your work over again in my own language. Still, I thought I should convey to you less of my own mind by merely stating assent than by placing before you my view in a positive and distinct form, so as to enable you to judge how far I really fulfil your meaning, and likewise what my own is worth.

You will perceive that much of what I have said



here is not fit to be said in public; especially for this great reason, that the demonstration in detail of the necessity for giving ground, and all strong statements of that necessity, enhance the evil from which they flow. This is a difficulty with me; higher interests require me to run the hazard of misapprehensions which in other circumstances it would be a duty to try to obviate. I may now try it, but it is with my hands tied.

A copy of my speech will be sent to you by the publisher. If you take the pains to read, you will find it probably less obscure than the report in the newspapers. In the meantime I am exceedingly thankful both for the interest you express and for the very valuable statement which you have put into my mouth. I cannot ask you to pursue the subject farther; but I am sure you will understand that it is not from any other motive than the fear of intrusion upon you.

Believe me, etc.,  
W. E. G.

23. *To the Rev. Christopher Wordsworth, D.D.*

HAGLEY,  
December 3, 1845.

MY DEAR DR. WORDSWORTH,

I am particularly obliged by your kindness in sending to me a copy of your sermon on Individual and National Duties, because of its near reference to subjects in which I have had occasion to feel a deep interest and to take a part. Indeed, I ought the more sensibly to feel this obligation because I cannot but perceive that my own recent course falls within the scope of your disapproval; and I am well aware that it involves a departure from that which I myself have indicated as the true policy of a State in its best condition. Such departure can be avoided until the national life, in its relation to religion, has sunk to a certain point, but no longer. From a nation so divided as we are, and so little faithful to the capabilities of our own institutions, we cannot, I fear, at least I cannot, longer ask or expect the return to a standard so much higher than our moral state.

This view, if it stood alone, is one of gloom and sadness. But, on the other hand, if (not without long-continued reflection, and even resistance) I can now look for less than you look for at the hands of the State, I feel that the very brightest hopes are necessarily treasured up for us in the religious energies of the Church, unless we ourselves shall destroy them.

Forgive me if I thus freely and yet thus slightly enter upon a subject so vast and so difficult, with an appearance, too, of presumption, as I must confess when I remember to whom I am writing. But it is one that has occupied a large share of the thoughts of my life, and on which I can more readily excuse myself in any fault towards you, than in the fault of coldness and reserve.

To your son, Dr. Christopher Wordsworth, too, I have written and spoken freely, if not fully, on this subject, though, I fear, not so as to afford him the satisfaction which he has furnished to me and to many others by his excellent publications.

I remain, my dear Dr. Wordsworth,  
Yours sincerely and obliged,  
W. E. GLADSTONE.

24. *To Sir James Graham.*

13, CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE,  
July 21, 1847.

MY DEAR SIR J. GRAHAM,

I know that I can trust to your personal indulgence, and there are some feelings so strong that it is an act of dishonesty to repress them. Such are the feelings which, not your vote, but your speech on the Manchester Bishopric Bill, and our conversation of this morning on it, confused in everything (on my side) but its results, have excited in my mind. I hope that I am not in any sense the organ of a party: I am sure that I do not now write in that capacity. I would rather, for instance, speak by the mouth or pen of Sandon than my own.

You view the Episcopate, in the Church of England, as a lofty isolated power, for the control of clerical offenders, and for the discharge of certain important but yet simply ritual duties.