

ART. V.—LIFE OF BISHOP WILBERFORCE. VOL. II.

Life of the Right Rev. Samuel Wilberforce, D.D., Lord Bishop of Oxford, and afterwards of Winchester. With Selections from his Diaries and Correspondence. By his Son, REGINALD G. WILBERFORCE. In three volumes. Vol. II. Portrait and two Illustrations. Pp. 446. Murray, 1881.

THE first volume of the Life of Bishop Wilberforce was briefly reviewed in THE CHURCHMAN as soon as it appeared, rather more than a year ago. That volume was edited by the Rev. A. R. Ashwell, Canon of Chichester. Canon Ashwell was a divine of ability and learning, respected by many of those Churchmen who were surprised to find that he had been selected to write the Memoir of Bishop Wilberforce. The Bishop was willing to be ranked as a High Churchman, or as an Evangelical High Churchman—very strong in regard to “the Church,” but both in private and in public he always repudiated *ultra*-Churchmanship. Canon Ashwell, however, was chosen to write the Bishop’s Life. He died while the concluding pages of the first portion of the work were passing through the printer’s hands.

In the Preface to the second volume, Mr. Reginald Wilberforce refers to the “lamented death” of Canon Ashwell. It was necessary, he says, to find a new Editor for the subsequent volumes:—

Having in the event been obliged to undertake the task which he left unfinished, I feel that I ought to state the reasons which induced me to incur so heavy a responsibility. Doubtless, as a general rule, a son is the person least capable of writing his father’s life. Accordingly, in conjunction with Mr. Murray, I endeavoured to discover a writer in whom the various conditions necessary for carrying on the work were approximately satisfied; but to every practical suggestion that was made some objection occurred, which in the end proved fatal. The next step was to consult a few of my father’s trusted friends, and particularly some of those who had originally suggested Canon Ashwell’s name in connection with the work. They insisted that I must do what I could myself, and they generously offered me their counsel and assistance. . . . It is hoped that in this volume the lines traced by Canon Ashwell will not have been departed from.

Mr. Wilberforce adds that “Canon Ashwell’s notes respecting the letters and entries in the Bishop’s diary which he thought it desirable to insert, have been scrupulously adhered to wherever it was possible to do so.” This second volume, therefore, bears traces of the bias of the Editor of the first volume. In the chapter on the Gorham Controversy, Mr. Wilberforce states that “he has had the advantage of the supervision of the Right Hon. Sir R.

Phillimore." The Lord Bishop of Ely, also, we learn from the Preface, has given assistance in the preparation of this volume. On the "grave subject of Confession," says Mr. Wilberforce, especial prominence has been given to the Bishop's views. In stating this fact, Mr. Wilberforce asserts that the pamphlet published "shortly after the Bishop's death," a pamphlet professing to contain his last utterances on the subject, "is in reality only a partial report of what he said on the occasion to which it refers."¹

The first volume closes with the end of the Hampden controversy; the period of the present volume is 1848-1861.

In the year 1848, February 11, Archbishop Howley died, and on the 20th of February, just after the announcement that Dr. Sumner, Bishop of Chester, was appointed to the See of Canterbury, Dr. Wilberforce wrote a letter to Miss Noel. It is the first in this volume of many references to the subject of pre-ferment. The letter runs thus:—

I am very glad it is Chester, not the others. Now about myself: I feel that if it had not been for the Hampden controversy I should have been put there. Now, when I think this I have rather a sad feeling, as if I had made a great mistake, and thrown away a great means of usefulness. But this is only a *feeling*. I *know* that God has ordered all, and I really do not believe I would have it otherwise, and I am sure it would have been a most *trying* position for me. Is this what you wanted to speak of to me?

On March 9th, in the Bishop's diary, appears a mention of a "literary breakfast." The Editor remarks that breakfasts of this type were at that time much in fashion. "Of the great literary clubs—Grillions, The Club, and Nobody's—the two first breakfasted as well as dined together on certain fixed days, and many members of these clubs—among others, Macaulay, Rogers, Hallam, Lord Carlisle, and the Bishop—continued this custom in their own houses." From the private diary of Lord Carlisle a

¹ Mr. Wilberforce makes this statement, probably, as a reply to the remarks in the *Quarterly Review*. An ably-written and exceedingly interesting review of the first volume appeared in the *Quarterly*, No. 297 (Jan., 1880), and the writer, according to report a High Churchman distinguished as much for his learning as for his loyalty to the Reformed Church of England, took occasion to protest against Ritualistic teaching and practices. He quoted from Bishop Wilberforce's Address (un-written) delivered to the Rural Deans of his diocese at Winchester House, July 15th, 1873, four days before his death. Notes of the Bishop's discourse were freely taken by many present, and "a precious pamphlet," says the *Quarterly Review*, edited by the late lamented Bishop of Guildford, was prepared and published. This pamphlet, however, Mr. Wilberforce appears to depreciate; he dismisses it as only "a partial report" of the Bishop's utterances.

passage, describing a breakfast given by the Bishop, in 1852, is quoted by Mr. Wilberforce, as follows:—

Breakfast with the Bishop of Oxford, Hallam, Macaulay, Milman, Argyll, Ashburton, Bunsen, Murchison, Milnes. Extremely agreeable, and would have been still more so but there was a tendency to talk very loud and all at once. It was at first a little too polemical for the party, running on the strong division against Bennett the night before in the House of Commons, and how near the doctrines of purgatory and practices of confession a clergyman of the Church of England might go to. I think almost all were against restricting liberty by legislation.

In the spring of 1848, the Bishop writes to Miss Noel about an Ordination at Wantage:—

I administered the Holy Communion to 160, amongst them a large number of young people whom I confirmed¹ here last year. We went home to dinner at 3—a party of clergy, some from Oxford, some from the neighbourhood. At 4 we went to afternoon service, and Archdeacon Clerke preached. At 7 we went to an evening Litany and sermon, and I preached to them. We had some talk in the evening, an 8 o'clock prayer next morning, and after breakfast I came away. Butler is working the parish with admirable diligence and, at present, success. He seems to me more to combine the good of the Evangelical party with the devotion of the High Church than almost any young man I know. His only danger is on the latter side.

In November, 1848, in a letter from the Bishop, appears the following:—

Friday morning the school service and sermon in poor Ryder's old church, where fifteen years ago I had preached for him, he even then greatly mistrusting my doctrine, and beloved Sophia² being, I well remember, quite melted under sounds which spoke to her of other days and her father's church.

Some of the most interesting portions of the Bishop's diary recall his bereavement. Many touching passages bring before us the man as he was in secret before God; they reveal at the same time the depth of his sorrow and the strength of his trust.

¹ As to Confirmations in former days, in some parts of the country at all events, we may quote the following story:—"At a certain large town a local publican presented a petition to the Bishop, asking for pecuniary compensation for loss of trade. He stated that his was the principal inn in the town; that Confirmations used to be held only occasionally; that when they were held hundreds of young men and women used to come into the town, remaining there all day, and coming at night to his house—the girls in their white confirmation dresses; that he there gave a ball, which was always very largely attended; that owing to the changes which the Bishop had introduced he had lost the profits he had been accustomed to make."

² Mrs. Ryder, the Bishop's sister-in-law.

The following verses, written in 1848, recall a visit of husband and wife to Torquay in 1827 :—

The sea breeze breathes as softly as it did breathe of old,
 The ships are gathered, as of yore, within their ocean fold,
 The bluff rocks breast as proudly the mad waves' war and surf,
 The streamlets steal as gently throughout the emerald turf;
 The little waves still leap upon the sparkling sand,
 And cast, with hissing murmur, their burden on the strand :
 All is as when we looked on it; the lanes through which we
 walked,
 The turret stairs we mounted, the banks on which we talked;
 Flowers, bright as those we gathered, spring where our wild
 flowers sprung,
 And still the birds sing sweetly, as if to us they sung ;
 But *thou* hast left me here alone, and oh ! my heart is sore,
 And from these eyes the bitter tears now cannot choose but
 pour ;
 For when silver waves are murmuring, and flowers are gleaming
 bright,
 And when soft airs are sighing, in evening's rosy light,
 I miss my fond hand's pressure, and the music of thy voice,
 And the deep light of thine eyes, which made this heart rejoice ;
 Till oft I long in sadness to break the weary chain
 Which binds me to this earth, and be with thee again ;
 But then a still voice near me falls on my inmost heart,
 Still whispering to me, " Faint not, nor from thy burden start ;
 In love I did appoint it thee, and I am ever near
 To share thy hidden anguish, thy stifled sob to hear :
 Look to My Cross and Passion, and dare to follow Me,
 Nor say that earth is barren whilst I am there with thee."

Writing from Lavington, June, 1851, the Bishop says :

Twenty-three years ago to-morrow, and the sun shone on me as I came out of that church the most blessed of bridegrooms, having won her whom I had loved, as few love so young, ever since the vision of her beauty enchanted my early boyhood. How has wave followed wave from that day to this! Oh! and how has mercy and loving-kindness and forbearance and compassionate forgiveness been multiplied and abounded upon me year after year.

In 1849 appeared a "Journal in France," by Mr. Allies, a young High Church clergyman, whose conduct on a former occasion had been severely censured by the Bishop (vol. i. p. 405). "The Journal," writes the bishop, "is the most undisguised, unblushing preference for Rome I almost ever read." From Mr. Allies he endeavoured to obtain some retractation or explanation of the opinions advanced, but in vain. He then determined, acting on Dr. Lushington's opinion, to take legal proceedings. Baron Alderson, however, "and others," insisted

that if the case "came before the Courts, the Church would be the sufferer." A declaration was somehow extracted that Mr. Allies "adhered to the Articles of the Church in their plain, literal, and grammatical sense;" and he promised not to publish a second edition of the Journal. In a letter to Mr. Allies, we may observe, the Bishop had stated that the language of the Journal as to the celebration of the Mass and as to the Eucharist seemed to him "to contradict the explicit teaching of our Church in her condemnation,¹ in the Twenty-eighth Article, of the Roman dogma of Transubstantiation." Further, the whole tone of the "Journal," as to the Church of England, seemed to the Bishop "depreciating and even insulting." Mr. Allies, indeed, wished "to make out that he might hold all Roman doctrine except the Pope's supremacy, and yet remain" a Minister of the English Church. The Bishop called upon him, in solemn terms, to renounce the emoluments which he exercised and enjoyed on the condition of holding Articles which he publicly contradicted. It was after the Bishop had determined to send the case to the Court of Arches, and had retained counsel, that Baron Alderson, a friend of both parties, intervened. He had a very great affection for Allies, he wrote, on the 21st April, and, while admitting his errors, he would set against them a self-denying life, &c. In a second letter he wrote that he had seen "Manning, Pusey, and Richards . . . Edward Coleridge and his brother the Judge. They all certify to me that the discussion of this subject will unsettle MANY [small caps. in the text] minds which for the sake of the peace of the Church it is desirable to keep quiet, and that an extensive schism would be likely to be the consequence of further proceedings. I do myself believe they are right." This curious letter was accompanied or quickly followed by an apology and retraction from Mr. Allies, and Dr. Wilberforce, "after consulting the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Bishop of London," resolved to abstain from originating legal proceedings. In a letter to the Archdeacon of Oxford, dated May 18th, his lordship briefly stated, for the information of the clergy, that

¹ "I quote words of yours," wrote the Bishop, "which seem to assert a bodily presence of our Lord in the Holy Sacrament; and these, without further explanation, you allege are justified by the assertion in our Catechism of His *Spiritual* presence. To my quotation of passages, in which you justify (1) the adoration of the Holy Sacrament, though it is distinctly condemned in the Articles and in the dogmatic statement appended to our Communion Office; (2) the invocation of saints; (3) the use of relics, &c., you say nothing. You cannot, I conceive, acknowledge the authority of my office, without allowing that you are bound on my requiring it, as again I do, to explain, justify, or retract distinct passages in your published work, against which I except as directly contradicting the letter and spirit of our Articles and Formularies." Firm language, worthy of a Chief Pastor.

he had accepted the "submission" of Mr. Allies. On the 27th of August the following letter was sent:—

The Bishop of Oxford to the Rev. T. W. Allies.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—Owing to my not being in the habit of seeing the *Tablet* newspaper, I have only just become aware, through the Oxford paper, of the existence of a letter stated to have been addressed by you, on the 2nd of June, to the editor of the *Tablet* newspaper, containing the following words:—"I adore (at the celebration of the Eucharist), with the adoration due only to God the Lord Jesus Christ, truly, really, personally, and substantially present under the species of bread and wine." I shall be obliged by your informing me if that published letter is to be attributed to yourself, and if you adhere to the doctrinal statement contained in the words above quoted, and, if so, whether you consider them as reconcilable with the doctrine of the Prayer-Book and the Articles of the Church of England, taken in their strict, literal, and grammatical sense.

I am, very sincerely yours,

S. OXON.

On September 3, the Bishop received a letter from Mr. Allies apprising him of his intention to resign the living. Shortly afterwards Mr. Allies was received into the Church of Rome.

In February, 1850, Colonel Phipps wrote to the Bishop of Oxford, thanking him in the Prince Consort's name for his speech at Willis's Rooms on the proposed Industrial Exhibition. The Bishop appears to have taken a leading part in inviting persons to help in this work.¹

In March of the same year, the long-expected judgment of the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in the Gorham case was delivered. On this subject we cannot, in our present notice, even touch; but we may remark that Bishop Wilberforce, referring to the doctrine, condemned "this vile judgment," while, in referring to the tribunal he declared that "purely spiritual questions ought to be left to purely spiritual judges." At the same time, however, he said that the "*just* Supremacy of the Crown" ought to be maintained. Bishop Blomfield introduced a Bill providing that all cases affecting doctrine should be removed from the Judicial Committee to the Upper House of Convocation. The Bill was thrown out by a majority of thirty-three; most of the Prelates, including the Archbishop, remained neutral. Bishop Wilberforce supported the Bill as being "the only safe move at present!"

In May, 1851, the Bishop spoke on the observance of Sunday. He felt bound to do all in his "power to protect those who wish

¹ One of the answers which he received runs thus:—"John Bright begs to inform the Bishop of Oxford that he declines to have his name on the Committee intended to interest the working classes in the Exhibition of 1851: his many engagements rendering it impossible for him to give any attention to the subject."

to spend their Sundays religiously." He did not think that the Fourth Commandment "applies to us in the Christian Church,"¹ but, at the same time, he would not consent to any opening of Museums or other public exhibitions on that day. (Vol. i. p. 377.)

In September, 1850, the Bishop of Oxford wrote to Mr. Gladstone, from Lavington, concerning one of those who had entreated him a little while before not to bring Romanizing teaching on the Lord's Supper before the Courts. "My stay here has let me see much of Manning. . . . He is lost to us :—

He has gone back into those early times when, what afterwards became their corruptions, were only the germ buds of Catholic usages; he has fully accustomed his mind to them; until a system which wants them seems to him incomplete and un-Catholic. . . . Few can at all understand what his and my brother's present state are to me."

The Bishop's letter shows how groundless was the assertion that the decision on Baptismal Regeneration drove Archdeacon Manning to Rome. Mr. Gladstone, we read, dwelt on "the refusal of the Bishops to propagate a declaration that the Gorham judgment was neither the law nor the faith of the Church of England." In the year 1841, however, Manning "had made up his mind that unity was a first law of the Church of Christ, and that therefore the position of the Church of England was tenable only as an extreme and anomalous case." Writing in 1850, Archdeacon Manning "admitted that his teaching was nearer to that of the Roman Church than to the Church of England of that day," by which he meant, in effect, the teaching of the Reformed Church. "For many years," we read, "he had no sympathy with Protestantism, and what he termed the compromises of the Reformation." "The opinions of 1841 had strengthened year by year."

The Gorham judgment served as a pretext, but it is clear that the Archdeacon was in heart a Romanist years before. In November, 1850, he went over.

In 1850, Mrs. Ryder, the Bishop's sister-in-law, died. He writes:—

Perhaps you have not heard of the blow which has fallen upon us and very specially on poor G. D. Ryder and beloved Mrs. Sargent, who has now only Mary left of that lovely family of seven, with whom God enriched that happiest of parsonages, Graffham. . . . Newman was at Ryder's, but I thought it best not to see him.

Of Mrs. Sargent, the beautiful old lady to whom the preceding

¹ The Bishop wrote that he could not join in any petition resting the obligation of the observance of the Sunday on the Fourth Commandment. No explanation is given, however, of the prayer in the Communion Office which all Churchmen are directed to offer after the reading of that Commandment in Divine service.

letter infers, many will recall the chivalrous and deferential manner with which the Bishop always treated her. For twenty years (from 1841 till her death in 1861) she lived with the Bishop, superintending his household and taking care of his children. Her affection for him is charmingly described in one of her letters:—

I must ever feel that his tenderness is one of the best blessings I possess: it is quite impossible for any one to know how I prize it, and what a balm it has often been to my bruised heart. Surely the sight of him is “gude for sair een.”

The allusions to the Ryders in the Bishop's diary above quoted leads us to a painful subject. Three brothers of the Bishop, two brothers-in-law, and his only daughter and son-in-law went over to Rome. The article in the *Quarterly Review*, from which we have already quoted, states that the Bishop—no one who knew him will doubt it—was thoroughly loyal to the Reformed Church of England. “His anti-Romish utterances,” we read, “are as strong and as grand as any that are anywhere to be met with; and he meant every word that he said—perhaps a little more. Indeed, he never made any secret of his uncompromising detestation of the whole Popish system, with the depths and the shallows of which he showed himself intimately acquainted; his vigorous understanding often enabling him, in a few manly sentences, utterly to demolish the sophistries of its advocates, whether of the Anglican or of the Romish communion; as well as to expose the essential hollowness of the system, together with its fatal tendencies—moral, intellectual, and social.” But it was the misfortune of Wilberforce, continues the *Quarterly*, that he was appointed to Oxford in the year when Newman's desertion brought matters to a crisis; he found himself floated by a rapidly rising tide, amid currents and eddies which were enough to perplex the ablest of steersmen:—

It may be suspected, without a shadow of disloyalty to Wilberforce's memory, that had he brought to the episcopate certain other gifts besides those splendid qualifications for government with which we have already credited him so freely, it would have fared better with the Church of England at this time. Enthusiasm sometimes requires to be guided, as well as promoted; to be checked, as well as to be guided; and only checked in one direction in order that it break out more usefully in another. Wilberforce's leading idea was to promote *activity* in his diocese. He welcomed earnestness, *as such*, wherever he found it; and flattered himself that he should always be in time to check or to restrain the men, who, in the meantime, availed themselves of the sanction of his great name and authority to push forward their own well-meant (but by no means always judicious) crotchets. Conscientious of his own powers of government, of his personal influence, of

the loyalty and devotedness of the great bulk of his clergy, Wilberforce often suffered things to go too far in a direction which in his inmost heart he entirely disallowed. In consequence he was occasionally destined to make the dreary discovery that some of his lieutenants had played him false, had been wanting in honesty. An explosion in the diocese was sure to follow, and this did more than alienate confidence from him. It created downright suspicion and distrust, which was not the less reasonable, because *personally* he did not deserve it. The mischief, however, had been done, and could not be undone. The offshoots of error could never afterwards be eradicated. A more wary, or let it be called a less trustful, spirit would have selected his lieutenants with more caution; would have been more solicitous to cut off occasions of offence; would have considered that a diocese is for all time, whereas a bishop's incumbency is but for a brief span of years; and that allowance, if not encouragement, given at one period to unsound principles and unlawful practices, *cannot* be withdrawn at another; lastly, would have bethought himself, that when a bishop's three brothers, two brothers-in-law, only daughter and son-in-law, not to mention many of his personal intimates, have lapsed to Romanism, the outer world *must needs* look on suspiciously, and be prepared to misinterpret every act of his which may seem to point in the dreaded direction. And will any one say that those men were to be severely blamed, who, educated in a widely different school, and beyond all things solicitous for maintaining purity of doctrine, as well as resolved to be found faithful themselves to the teaching of the Church of England, declaimed passionately against what, in their eyes, was nothing less than the betrayal of a sacred trust?

Elsewhere, in this *Quarterly Review* article, the great success of Wilberforce, as a Bishop, is discussed:—

If you were called upon (this was once put to one of the Bishop's greatest intimates) to state wherein lay the secret of Wilberforce's success, what should you say? In his *power of sympathy*, was the ready answer; and it was probably the true one. There never was a more enthusiastic sympathizer with his clergy. He was large-hearted, liberal, and generous to a fault; prompt to enter into every one's needs, difficulties, discouragements, prepared to throw himself heart and soul into any project which seemed to him capable of being successfully worked, and which had good for its object. He was courageous also in such matters to the verge of indiscretion; evinced no official stiffness about initiating a novelty provided it carried on its front the promise of good; but, on the contrary, must walk straight to the front, and take the lead in whatever experiment seemed to him worth the trial. And then how he graced the leadership which by common suffrage would have been assigned to him, even had it not been his by right! His ready eloquence, his delightful manner, his genial warmth, *ensured* the success of whatever he undertook. In the friendship of men of the school called the "Evangelical" he had an inherited claim. But then he also reckoned men of the very opposite way of thinking among his chiefest friends, and had a

measure of generous sympathy for all. In this way he not only drew strangers to himself, but bound them fast when they once came within the sphere of his immediate influence. His temperament effected more; it conciliated prejudice, broke down opposition, cemented confidence and affection.

Let the whole truth, however, be stated. The man's gifts and graces being such as are now described, and the ends to which he directed them so admirable, are we to believe, continues the *Quarterly*, that we have been reading of an ecclesiastic without a flaw? By no means.

His very excellences were a snare to him; his very gifts and graces proved his most effectual drawbacks. He was *too* clever, *too* self-relying, whereby he often put himself in a false position, and exposed himself to unfriendly criticism. Again, he was *too* persuasive, *too* fascinating in his manner, *too* fertile in expedients, and thus he furnished not a few with pleas for suspecting him of insincerity. Sure of himself and unsuspecting of others, he was habitually *too* confiding, *too* unguarded in his utterances. But, above all, his besetting fault was that he was a vast deal *too facile*. The consequence might have been foreseen. He was sometimes obliged to "hark back"—to revoke—to *unsay*. This bred distrust. Notwithstanding his thorough mastery of the principles of Anglo-Catholic divinity, it may be questioned whether, at the outset of his career, he had that clear perception of *where* to draw the line, which in one so conspicuous as he was, early entrusted with such a vast amount of responsibility, is even indispensable; especially if his lot be cast in perilous times, and in what way he emphatically termed a *transition* period of the Church's history. Accordingly, Wilberforce would sometimes adventure the partial allowance of practices against which, on mature reflection, he must have seen that he would have acted more wisely if he had, from the beginning, set his face like a flint. He was (one can but repeat it) too fond of being "all things to all men"—too apt to commit himself through his very versatility and large-heartedness. All this did harm.

The truth and force of these remarks cannot be denied.

To return, however, to the volume before us.

When the Papal Bull was issued establishing a Roman hierarchy in England, meetings were held to protest and petition Her Majesty. Mr. Wilberforce's expression—"A second Titus Oates' fever seemed for a short time to have seized the nation"—is not, to say the least, remarkable for its accuracy or good taste. It is true that the irritation or indignation was very great, and meetings were held all over the country. A meeting was to be held at Reading. The Bishop, in writing to his brother the Archdeacon, remarked that he had "some apprehensions from the Low Church party;" . . . he rather expected "to be blown up!" "I believe Lord John will do nothing but try, like a cunning little fellow as he is, to puzzle the scent of his own trail, by turning out Tractarianism as his bagged fox."

Lord John Russell was "cunning" or clever enough, no doubt; but if any one desires to see an exhibition of cleverness in managing a meeting, he may read the Bishop of Oxford's speech (p. 57), in which he checks the applause which not unnaturally followed a reference to Romanists within the Reformed Church by asserting that to introduce discord into such a meeting was a sin against God!

After describing the Oxford gathering, Mr. Wilberforce remarks that "a counter protest was got up by some of the Buckinghamshire clergy of an extreme school, who, in fact, took the line taken by Lord John Russell in his published letter to the Bishop of Durham—viz., that there was no danger to the Church of England by reason of the Papal Bull, but that the real danger lay in the existence of concealed Popery within her fold." Omitting the words "of an extreme school," is not this description just and true? The Bishop's reply to the "Rev. W. R. Fremantle, the Rural Dean who had forwarded the protest," seems to us, we must confess, singularly weak. Its adroitness is undeniable.

Mr. Wilberforce, as we have said, has thought fit to stigmatize independent men as "extreme." We never heard that Dean Fremantle belonged to an "extreme school;" but nothing is easier for a member of a Palace clique than to describe a clergyman who takes his own line—without waiting to see how his Bishop goes—as "extreme," or a "Puritan," or as "wishing to become notorious." On the page preceding that which gives the letter to "my dear Fremantle," Mr. Wilberforce indulges in a sneer at two clergymen who came to the opening of a church in gowns. The gowns were their own; the surplices belonged to their parishes. But Mr. Wilberforce can see no principle in the reluctance of two clergymen to agree with his father about a surpliced procession. He says:—

The following story furnishes a proof of the Bishop's tact in dealing with men who wished to become notorious for conscience' sake. A new church was about to be opened by the Bishop, and a number of neighbouring clergy were invited to be present at the ceremony. Arrangements had been made for the clergy to walk into the Church in procession in surplices, the Bishop last. The procession was formed, all was ready, when the Rector came to the Bishop, saying, "All will be spoilt: two clergy are come in black gowns, they declare they will wear them in the procession; they are come for the purpose of thus openly showing their Evangelical principles." The Bishop replied, "All will be well, they will go in surplices." The Rector assured the Bishop that this was impossible, and that any remonstrance he might make would only cause a disturbance. The Bishop, after again reassuring the Rector, said to the clergy, who were formed two and two, "Gentlemen, are you ready?" and, receiving a reply in the affirmative,

he stepped along the ranks—accosted the first black-gowned clergyman with “ Good morning, Mr. ——. Will you have the kindness to read the first lesson for us this morning ?” Then passing to the second, with the request that he would read the second lesson, the two fled to find surplices, and the procession went into Church with the two clergy clad as the others.

We have heard this story in various forms; and a good story it is. As to the Bishop’s “ tact” there will, probably, be no difference of opinion; but whether or no his son’s remark, that these two clergymen “ wished to become notorious for conscience’ sake,” is justified by the story as he himself gives it, it will not be easy for all readers of the Bishop’s “ Life” to agree. At the present day, no doubt, certain dignitaries (we will not say “ of an extreme school”) find a peculiar pleasure in processions; and surplices with hoods (particularly the Oxford M.A.) look prettier than gowns. Hence the old custom of meeting in the vestry is set aside; and the clergy, robed, are marshalled two and two to walk across the garden through the churchyard and up the church. But if a clergyman, older perhaps than his Bishop, eminent for piety, zeal, and learning, prefers not to take out of his parish the surplice which belongs to the parish, or from other reasons prefers, in a day of excessive ceremonial to keep to old-fashioned ways, why on earth should he be frowned upon, or even openly rebuked? We have heard of at least one answer to Bishop Wilberforce on this point which put him to silence.

In December, 1850, the Bishop “ described his position as to the two parties in the Church,” in these terms:—“ I am for the party of the Church of England and nothing narrower.” Replying to a letter from Dr. Dallas, he declares that he has held and will hold what he esteems the truth of both parties, and the party violence of neither. He says:—

MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is utterly untrue that there has ever been any change in my opinions, or that I have encouraged, promoted, or protected Tractarianism (properly so called), or that I do not see its tendency towards Rome, or that there has been any uncertainty in my course. I was a Church of England man of the school of Hooker, Beveridge, and Andrewes, and so I am now. I *always* held the doctrine of the Apostolical succession, *vide* my first sermon before the Bishop of Winchester; of Baptismal Regeneration, *vide* my sermons before the Queen. I always held the great Evangelical truths as the life of my soul; I always opposed real Tractarianism—*i.e.*, the putting tradition into the place which Holy Scripture alone can occupy, ceremony in the place of substance, giving to the Sacraments the character belonging only to our Lord, craving after confession and absolution, &c., as sacramentals.

At the same time, in a letter to Lord Ashley, he speaks of

opposition to *bonâ fide* Romanizing tendencies in the Church, "by which (says the Bishop) I mean the revival of a system of auricular confession, sacramental absolution, the sacrificial character of the Lord's Supper,¹ the denial of Justification by Faith, &c. &c." In the same letter the Bishop declared that he had dropped no one truth of his Evangelical education. Shortly afterwards, in a letter to his brother, he says: "I had a satisfactory Ordination. . . . Not one Low Churchman in the set. What a remarkable feature in our present state and how very full of hope."

Chapter iii., including the years 1850-2, relates to Dr. Pusey, who was privately inhibited.² The chief points discussed are the adaptations of Roman Catholic works of devotion, and private confession. On July 16, Mr. Justice Coleridge wrote to the Bishop that the prosecution of Dr. Pusey would unsettle the minds of many, &c.—the same story as in the case of Mr. Allies, a story since then oftentimes repeated, with disastrous consequences to the Church.

In September, 1852, writing to Mr. Gladstone about the Chancellorship of the University of Oxford, vacant by the death of the Duke of Wellington, the Bishop, as the managing man, explains why the Duke of Newcastle was not brought forward:—

I should far prefer him, but I am convinced we could not carry him, and by starting him may bring in Harrowby or Shaftesbury. I have, therefore, advised that we do not oppose Lord Derby.

The Bishop was afraid that Lord Derby, if opposed, would be "brought in as the Low Church candidate; the whole effect of Gladstone's contest and success would be lost."

When Lord Derby's Government fell, Lord Aberdeen (Dec. 19) was summoned to Osborne. Mr. Gordon, private secretary to his father, having communicated this, the Bishop replies immediately as follows:—

The Bishop of Oxford to the Hon. A. Gordon.

December 20, 1852.

MY DEAR MR. GORDON,—I have to my closest intimates for six months past said that it seemed to me, humanly speaking, that the security of

¹ How far matters have advanced since Bishop Wilberforce wrote these words may be estimated by well weighing one fact. In 1879, the Rev. E. P. Willis, Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon (the Bishop's pet college) wrote a pamphlet to prove that the Eucharist is a sacrifice! (The pamphlet was reviewed in the last CHURCHMAN.) The Vice-Principal of Cuddesdon pleads for the "five mystic colours" and "sacrificial vestments!"

² Jan. 24, 1853. The Bishop, at Clewer, "resolved that none should be admitted who could not whilst in it be contented with the spiritual aid of Bishop or Chaplains, or that it would become a nest of true Puseyites. Also on a full and absolute removal of crucifixes."

the Church and the Throne turned on whether the Queen got Lord Aberdeen or one of the other chiefs of the mere Whig party as the Prime Minister on the certain fall of Lord Derby's Government. I will, God helping me, make it my daily prayer that he may be strengthened for the great sacrifice he is making and guided in all his ways. Will you, if you find a spare moment, say to Lord Aberdeen in one word what I feel on the matter? I am most sincerely yours,
S. OXON.

"Our friends are in at last," wrote the Bishop to his brother. When the new Chancellor of the Exchequer was opposed by Mr. Dudley Percival, the Bishop warmly supported Mr. Gladstone's candidature. In writing to Prince Albert, he spoke of the degradation of the University "in this disgraceful contest;" and he took the opportunity of telling H.R.H. the feeling about Lord John Russell's conduct "in administering the patronage of the Crown." In writing to Dr. Farley, asking him for his vote, he pleaded "the interests of our Apostolic Church," and asserted that the Church's interests were most deeply involved in maintaining Mr. Gladstone in power.

In Feb. 1853, the Clergy Reserve question came on in the House of Lords. The Bishop of Oxford was anxious to support his political friends; but the difficulty was that Archdeacon Bethune had sent him a petition strong in opposition. Writing to "My dear Gordon," the Bishop begs him to consult his father, the Prime Minister. "I am certain I could do more for the right cause by awaiting the debate." To speak early was, in fact, as he said, being "near the wind," and Lord Aberdeen advised the Bishop not to do a doubtful thing, but to wait. The Duke of Newcastle had been consulted, and the following letter from his Grace is rather curious:—

MY DEAR LORD, ABERDEEN,—Though sorry not to have the benefit of an early announcement of the support of the Bishop of Oxford, I can have no hesitation as to the wisdom and propriety of your advice to him. It would never do for him to play the part of Balaam and, being called by Bethune to curse his enemies, to bless them altogether.

I am, yours very sincerely,

NEWCASTLE.

In March, 1853, the Bishop announced to his brother that "Jackson of St. James's is to be the new Bishop. Longley is offered Lincoln if he wishes to change. It is quite a *respectable* appointment." Lord Aberdeen, it seems, told the Bishop of London that a good time was coming for the "men who for the last eight years had been systematically excluded." In the month of April Mr. Gordon said to Bishop Wilberforce: "If the Bishop of London were to be taken, my father would appoint Bishop of Salisbury."