James Ewing Ritchie

The Real Gladstone: An Anecdotal Biography

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Содержание

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PREFACE

In this little work I have aimed to write, not a history or a biography, not a criticism or a eulogy, but merely to give a few scattered notes, gathered from many quarters, for the general public, rather than for the professional politician. Lord Rosebery is reported to have said that it will require many writers to give a complete biography of Mr. Gladstone. He may be right; but the evil of it will be, the work, if exhaustive, will be exhausting. Especially will it be so in these busy times, when yesterday's biographies become stale to a public forgetful of the past, caring only for the present, oblivious of the morrow. It is almost an impertinence to speak of the many claims Mr. Gladstone has on a people whom he has served so long. All I claim to do is to give a few data which may help them to estimate the

> 'Heroic mind
> Expressed in action, in endurance proved' —

in short, more or less imperfectly, 'The Real Gladstone.'
Clacton,
May, 1898.

CHAPTER I
BIRTH AND SCHOOLDAYS

Many, many years ago England's foremost statesman, as George Canning then was, distrusted by the multitude, feared by his colleagues, regarded with suspicion by the First Gentleman of the Age – as it was the fashion to term George the Magnificent, who was then seated on the British throne – wearied of the strife and turmoil of party, spent a short time at Seaforth House, bidding what he deemed his farewell to his Liverpool correspondents. His custom, we are told, was to sit for hours gazing on the wide expanse of waters before him. His had been a marvellous career. Born out of the circle of the ruling classes, by his indomitable energy, the greatness of his intellectual gifts, his brilliant eloquence, he had lifted himself up above his contemporaries, and had become their leader; and here he was about to quit the scene of his triumphs – to reign as Viceroy in a far-off land. Canning, however, did not retire from the Parliamentary arena, but stopped at home to be Premier of Great Britain and Ireland, and to let all Europe know that this country had done with the Holy Alliance; that a new and better spirit was walking the earth; that the dark night of bigotry was past, and that the dawn of a better day had come. As he sat there looking out over the waters, a little one was to be seen playing below upon the sand. That little lad was the son of Canning's host and friend, and his name was William Ewart Gladstone. Does it not seem as if the little one playing on the sand had unconsciously caught something of the genius, of the individuality, of the eloquence, of the loftiness of aim, of the statesman who sat above him overlooking the sea? Circumstances have much to do with the formation of character. To the youthful Gladstone, Canning was a light, a glory, and a star.

William Ewart Gladstone was born on December 29, 1809, at a house which may still be seen, 62, Rodney Street, Liverpool. He was of Scotch extraction, his father, a Liverpool merchant, having an estate in Scotland. Mr. Gladstone senior lived to become one of the merchant princes of Great Britain, a Baronet, and a Member of Parliament. He died, at the advanced age of eighty-seven, in 1851. His wife was Anne, daughter of Andrew Robertson, of Stornoway. They had six children; William Ewart Gladstone was the third. The family were all brought up as debaters. The children and their parents are said to have argued upon everything. They would debate whether the meat should be boiled or broiled, whether a window should be shut or opened, and whether it was likely to be fine or wet next day.

As a little boy, Gladstone went to school at Seaforth, where the late Dean Stanley was a pupil. The latter is responsible for the following: 'There is a small school near Liverpool at which Mr. Gladstone was brought up before he went to Eton. A few years ago, another little boy who was sent to this school, and whose name I will not mention, called upon the old clergyman who was the headmaster. The boy was now a young man, and he said to the old clergyman: "There is one thing in which I have never in the least degree improved since I was at school – the casting up of figures." "Well," replied the master, "it is very extraordinary that it should be so, because certainly no one could be a more incapable arithmetician at school than you were; but I will tell you a curious thing. When Mr. Gladstone was at the school, he was just as incapable at addition and subtraction as you were; now you see what he has become – he is one of the greatest of our financiers."'

William Gladstone left home for Eton after the summer holidays of 1821, the headmaster being Dr. Keate. Sir Roderick Murchison describes him as 'the prettiest little boy that ever went to Eton.' From the first he was a hard student and well behaved, and exercised a good influence over his schoolfellows. 'I was a thoroughly idle boy,' said the late Bishop Hamilton of Salisbury, 'but I was saved from worse things by getting to know Gladstone.' Another schoolfellow remembered how he turned his glass upside down, and refused to drink a coarse toast proposed according to custom at an election dinner. His most intimate friend was Arthur Hallam, of whom he wrote an article in the

Daily Telegraph, which created universal admiration. He had the courage of his opinions, and when bantered by some of his associates for his interfering on behalf of some ill-used pigs, he offered to write his reply 'in good round hand upon their faces.' He took no delight in games, but kept a private boat for his own use, and was a great walker with his select friends. He was accustomed on holidays to go as far as Salt Hall, to bully the fat waiter, eat toasted cheese, and drink egg-wine – hence he seems to have been familiarly known as Mr. Tipple. But he soon became especially distinguished by his editing the *Eton Miscellany*, and for his skill in debate at what was commonly called the Pop. Its meetings were generally held over a cook-shop, and its politics were intensely Tory, though current politics were forbidden subjects. His maiden speech was in favour of education. Eton at that time was not a good school, writes Sir Francis Doyle; but he testifies strongly to the virtues of the debating society. He continues: 'In the debating society Mr. Gladstone soon distinguished himself. I had the privilege of listening to his maiden speech. It began, I recollect, with these words: "Sir, in this age of increasing and still increasing civilization." After Mr. Gladstone's arrival, the debating society doubled and trebled itself in point of numbers, and the discussions became much fuller of interest and animation. Hallam and Mr. Gladstone took the lead.' Not content with the regular debating society, Mr. Gladstone and a few others, such as Miles Gaskell and Canning, established an inner one, held on certain summer afternoons in the garden of one Trotman. Sir Francis continues: 'It happened that my tutor, Mr. Okes, rented a small garden at the rear of Trotman's, and by some chance found himself there on the occasion of one of these debates. To his surprise, he heard three or four boys on the other side of the wall sneering, shouting, and boohooing in the most unaccountable manner. There seemed but one conclusion to him as an experienced Eton tutor – viz., that they were what we at the Custom-House used somewhat euphemistically to term under the influence of liquor. He thereupon summoned Mr. Gladstone to his study, listened gloomily and reluctantly to his explanations and excuses, and all but handed over our illustrious Premier, with his subordinate orators, to be flogged for drunkenness.'

Dr. Wilkinson, in his 'Reminiscences of Eton,' gives a couplet and its translation by Mr. Gladstone, when a boy at Eton:

'Ne sis O cera mollior,
Grandiloquus et vanus;
Heus bone non es gigas tu,
Et non sum ego nanus.'

'Don't tip me now, you lad of wax,
Your blarney and locution;
You're not a giant yet, I hope,
Nor I a Liliputian.'

As to the *Miscellany*, with which Mr. Gladstone had so much to do, Sir Francis continues: 'It would have fallen to the ground but for Mr. Gladstone's energy, perseverance, and tact. I may as well remark here that my father – as I have said elsewhere, a man of great ability as well as of great experience in life – predicted Mr. Gladstone's future eminence from the manner in which he handled this somewhat tiresome business. "It is not," he remarked, "that I think his papers better than yours or Hallam's – that is not my meaning at all; but the force of character he has shown in managing his subordinates (insubordinates I should rather call them), and the combination of ability and power that he has made evident, convince me that such a young man cannot fail to distinguish himself hereafter."' Further, Sir Francis Doyle writes: 'I cannot take leave of Mr. Gladstone's Eton career without recording a joke of his which, even in this distance of time, seems calculated to thrill the heart of Midlothian with horror and dismay. He was then, I must remind my hearers, a high Tory, and, moreover, used to criticise my passion for the turf. One day I was steadily computing the odds

for the Derby, as they stood in a morning newspaper. Now, it happened that the Duke of Grafton owned a colt called Hampden, who figured in the aforesaid list. "Well," cried Mr. Gladstone, reading off the odds, "Hampden, at any rate, I see, is in his proper place between *Zeal* and *Lunacy*!'"

The impression Gladstone made on his schoolfellows at Eton is clearly shown in a letter of Miles Gaskell to his mother, pleading for his going to Oxford rather than Cambridge: 'Gladstone is no ordinary individual… If you finally decide in favour of Cambridge, my separation from Gladstone will be a source of great sorrow to me.' And Arthur Hallam wrote: 'Whatever may be our lot, I am very confident that he is a bud that will blossom with a richer fragrance than almost any whose early promise I have witnessed.'

Gladstone, as has already been shown, was one of the principal members of the staff of the *Eton Miscellany*. He was then seventeen, and in one of the articles signed by him he expressed his fear that he would not be able to direct public opinion into the right channel. He was aware that merit was always rewarded, but he asked himself if he possessed that merit. He dared not presume that he did possess it, though he felt within him a something which made him hope to be able, without much hindrance, to gain public favour, and, as Virgil said, 'celerare viam rumore secundo.' We find Gladstone the Etonian expressing similar hopes in an article on 'Eloquence.' The young author shows us himself and his school-colleagues fascinated by the resounding debates in the House of Commons, and dreaming, boy-like, of making a successful Parliamentary début, perhaps being offered a Government berth – a Secretaryship of State, even the post of Prime Minister. While entertaining these ambitious views Mr. Gladstone calmed his mind by 'taking to poetry.' Several poetical pieces, including some verses on 'Richard Cœur-de-Lion,' and an ode to 'The Shade of Wat Tyler,' date from this period.

As a pendant to this fragmentary sketch of Mr. Gladstone's schooldays, we may quote the lively description of the young editor given by Sir Francis Doyle in 'A Familiar Epistle to W. E. Gladstone, Esq., M.P.,' published in 1841. Sir Francis paints a delightful picture of the *rédacteur-en-chef*:

'Who, in his editorial den,
Clenched grimly an eradicating pen,
Confronting frantic poets with calm eye,
And dooming hardened metaphors to die.
Who, if he found his young adherents fail,
The ode unfinished, uncommenced the tale,
With the next number bawling to be fed,
And its false feeders latitant or fled,
Sat down unflinchingly to write it all,
And kept the staggering project from a fall.'

Dr. Furnivall, president of the Maurice Rowing Club, lately sent Mr. Gladstone a copy of his letter on 'Sculls or Oars.' The ex-Prime Minister, in returning his thanks for the letter, says: 'When I was at Eton, and during the season, I sculled constantly, more than almost any other boy in the school. Our boats then were not so light as they now are, but they went along merrily, with no fear of getting them under water.'

CHAPTER II
GLADSTONE AT OXFORD

After spending six months with private tutors, in October, 1828, he went up to Christ Church, Oxford, and the following year was nominated to a studentship. 'As for Gladstone,' writes Sir Francis Doyle, 'in the earlier part of his undergraduateship he read steadily, and did not exert himself to shine as a speaker; in point of fact, he did not attempt to distinguish himself in the Debating Society till he had pretty well made sure of his distinction in the Schools. I used often to walk with him in the afternoon, but I never recollect riding or boating in his company, and I believe that he was seldom diverted from his normal constitutional between two and five along one of the Oxford roads. The most adventurous thing I ever did at Oxford in Mr. Gladstone's company, if it really were as adventurous as I find he still asserts it to have been, was when I allowed myself to be taken to Dissenting chapels. We were rewarded by hearing Dr. Chalmers preach on two occasions, and Rowland Hill at another time.'

Gladstone seems to have delighted in these escapades. His mother was an occasional attendant on the ministrations of the celebrated Dissenting preacher Dr. Raffles, of Liverpool, and possibly might have taken the future Premier with her. His attendance at church was very regular. 'He used rather to mount guard over my religious observances,' writes Sir Francis Doyle, 'and habitually marched me off after luncheon to the University sermon at two o'clock. Now, I have not the gift of snoring comfortably under a dull preacher; instead of a narcotic he acts on my nerves as an irritant, but with Mr. Gladstone the case was different. One afternoon I looked up, and discovered, not without a glow of triumph, that although the reverend gentleman above me had not yet arrived at his "Thirdly," my Mentor was sleeping the sleep of the just. "Hullo!" said I to myself, "no more two-o'clock sermons for me." Accordingly, on the very next occasion when he came to carry me off, my answer was ready: "No, thank you, not to-day. I can sleep just as well in my arm-chair as at St. Mary's." The great man was discomfited, and retired, shaking his head, but he acknowledged his defeat by troubling me no more in that matter.'

Cardinal Manning had been the principal leader in the Oxford Debating Society till Mr. Gladstone appeared upon the scene. At once he and Gaskell became the leading Christ Church orators, and the great oratorical event of the time was Mr. Gladstone's speech against the first Reform Bill. 'Most of the speakers,' writes Sir Francis Doyle, who was present on the occasion, 'rose more or less above their ordinary level, but when Mr. Gladstone sat down we all of us felt that an epoch in our lives had arrived. It was certainly the finest speech of his that I ever heard. The effect produced by that great speech led to his being returned to Parliament as M.P. for Newark by the Tory Duke of Newcastle, who is remembered for his question, "May I not do what I like with my own?"'

To return to Mr. Gladstone's career at the University. In 1831 he took a double first-class, and would easily have attained a Fellowship in any college where Fellowships depended upon a competitive examination. He held with Scott, the foremost scholar of the day, the second place in the Ireland for 1829. In that year a deputation from the Union of Cambridge went to Oxford to take part in a debate on the respective merits of Byron and Shelley. One of the Cambridge party was Monckton Milnes, afterwards Lord Houghton. He writes: 'The man that took me most was the youngest Gladstone, of Liverpool – I am sure a very superior person.' On all he seems to have exercised a beneficial influence. He deprecated the example of the gentlemen commoners, and did much to check the pernicious habit prevalent at that time in the University, of over-indulgence in wine. His tutor was the Rev. Robert Briscoe. He also attended the lectures of the Rev. Dr. Benton on divinity and Dr. Pusey on Hebrew. He read classics privately with a tutor of the Bishop of St. Andrews. In 1830 he was at Cuddesdon Vicarage with a small reading-party, where he seems to have mastered Hooker's 'Ecclesiastical Polity.' He founded and presided over an essay society called after

his name, of which he was successively secretary and president. In his maiden speech at the Union in 1830 he defended Catholic emancipation; declared the Duke of Wellington's Government unworthy of the confidence of the nation; opposed the removal of Jewish disabilities; and argued for the gradual emancipation of slavery rather than immediate abolition.

It is evident that all the time of his University career Mr. Gladstone had a profoundly religious bias, and at one time seems to have contemplated taking Holy Orders. Bishop Wordsworth declared that no man of his standing read the Bible more or knew it better. One of his fellow-students writes: 'Poor Gladstone mixed himself up with the St. Mary Hall and Oriel set, who are really for the most part only fit to live with maiden aunts and keep tame rabbits.' At this time Mr. Gladstone's High Churchmanship does not seem to have been so pronounced as it afterwards became. He was a disciple of Canning, and rejoiced at Catholic emancipation. 'When in Scotland, staying at his father's house in Kincardineshire, he attended the Presbyterian Kirk zealously and contentedly, and took me with him,' writes Sir Francis Doyle, 'to what they call the "fencing of the tables," an operation lasting five or six hours.'

One of Gladstone's college acquaintances was Martin Tupper, whose 'Proverbial Philosophy' had a sale out of all proportion to its merits, in 1864. He wrote —

'Orator, statesman, scholar, and sage,
The Crichton-more, the Gladstone of his age.'

'My first acquaintance with Gladstone,' Martin Tupper writes, 'was a memorable event. It was at that time not so common a thing for undergraduates to go to the Communion at Christ Church Cathedral, that holy celebration being supposed to be for the particular benefit of Deans and Canons and Masters of Arts; so when two undergraduates went out of the chancel together after Communion, which they had both attended, it is small wonder that they addressed each other genially, in defiance of Oxford etiquette, nor that a friendship so well begun has continued to this hour.' He testifies how Gladstone was the foremost man – warm-hearted, earnest, hard working, and religious, and had a following even in his teens.

The following anecdote is amusing. Tupper writes: 'I had the honour at Christ Church of being prize-taker of Dr. Benton's theological essay, "The Reconciliation of Matthew and John," when Gladstone, who had also contested it, stood second, and when Dr. Benton had me before him to give me the twenty-five pounds' worth of books, he requested me to allow Mr. Gladstone to have five pounds' worth, as he was so good a second.' Alas! Mr. Tupper in after-life was led to think that the man to whom at one time he looked up, had deviated from the proper path. In his 'Three Hundred Sonnets,' he kindly undertook, in the reference to Gladstone, to warn the public to

'Beware of mere delusive eloquence.'

And again he wrote of a

'Glozing tongue whom none can trust.'

Still, it is well to quote in this connection how Tupper considered Gladstone the central figure at Oxford University. He writes: 'Fifty years ago Briscoe's Aristotle class at Christ Church was comprised almost wholly of men who have since become celebrated, some in a remarkable degree; and as we believe that so many names afterwards attaining to great distinction have rarely been associated at one lecture board, either at Oxford or elsewhere, it may be allowed to one who counts himself the least and lowest of the company to pen this brief note of those old Aristotelians. In this class was Gladstone, ever from youth up the beloved and admired of many personal intimates.'

Miss Clough's character of Gladstone, solely from his handwriting, is thus recorded by Lord Houghton: 'A well-judging person; a good classic; considerate; apt to mistrust himself; undecided; if to choose a profession, would prefer the Church; has much application; a good reasoner; very

affectionate and tender in his domestic relations; has a good deal of pride and determination, or rather obstinacy; is very fond of society, particularly ladies'; is neat, and fond of reading.'

Bishop Wordsworth writes: 'My cousin William Wordsworth, then living at Eton, was dining at Liverpool at the house of a great Liverpool merchant just after Gladstone had taken his degree. Amongst the company were Wordsworth, the poet, and Mr. John Gladstone, the father of the future Premier. After dinner, the poet congratulated the father on the success of his distinguished son. "Yes, sir," replied the father, "I thank you. My son has greatly distinguished himself at the University, and I trust he will continue to do so when he enters public life, for there is no doubt that he is a man of great ability, but he has no stability.""

Sir Francis Doyle describes a visit he paid to Gladstone at his father's house. 'Whilst there,' he writes, 'I was very much struck with the remarkable acuteness and great natural powers of Mr. Gladstone the father. Under his influence, apparently, nothing was taken for granted between the father and his sons. A succession of arguments on great topics and small topics alike – arguments conducted with perfect good humour, but also with the most implacable logic – formed the staple of the family conversations. Hence, it was easy to see from what foundations Mr. Gladstone's skill as a debater was built up.' Further illustrative traits are supplied. For instance, one of the amusements of the place was shooting with bows and arrows. The arrows were lost in the long grass; Sir Francis would have left them to chance and time. Not so Mr. Gladstone. He insisted on their being all found. Again, on a trip to Dunottar Castle, Mr. Gladstone was riding a skittish chestnut mare, who would not let him open a gate in front of him. 'My cob,' Sir Francis writes, 'was perfectly docile, and quiet as a sheep. I naturally said, "Let me do that for you." But no; his antagonist had to be tamed, but it took forty minutes to do so, and then the horsemen proceeded on their way.' It is said that Mr. Rarey, the horse-tamer, subsequently had a high opinion of Mr. Gladstone's skill as an equestrian.

CHAPTER III
ENTERS PARLIAMENT

In 1832 Mr. Gladstone left Oxford, and after spending six months in Italy, he was recalled to England to become Member for Newark. In his address he declared that the duties of governors are strictly and peculiarly religious, and that legislators, like individuals, are bound to carry throughout their acts the spirit of the high truths they have acknowledged. Much required to be done for popular education, and labour should receive adequate remuneration. He regarded slavery as sanctioned by Holy Scripture, but he was in favour of the gradual education and emancipation of the slaves. It was said that he was the Duke of Newcastle's nominee. He replied that he was nothing of the kind – that he came there by the invitation of the Red Club, than whom none were more respectable and intelligent. He was returned at the head of the poll. Newark rejoiced in two members. Another Tory was second, and the Liberal candidate, Serjeant Wilde, was defeated. Mr. Gladstone accordingly took his seat in the first Reformed Parliament, which met in January, 1833. His maiden speech was on the Anti-slavery Debate, to defend his father from an attack made on him by Lord Howick with regard to the treatment of his slaves in Demerara. On the morning of the debate, as he was riding in Hyde Park, a passer-by pointed him out to another new member, Lord Charles Russell, and said, 'That is Gladstone; he is to make his maiden speech to-night; that will be worth hearing.'

Commenting on Mr. Disraeli's début in the House of Commons, Professor Prynne writes: 'This was a contrast to the graceful, harmonious, almost timid, maiden speech of Mr. W. E. Gladstone – a manner that I never saw equalled, except by Lord Derby when he was in the House of Commons. The speaking of these two was like a stream pouring foam, or it may be described as reading from a book. Of Mr. Gladstone we all agreed in saying, "This is a young man of great promise."' A foreigner writes that until he had heard Mr. Gladstone speak he never believed that the English was a musical language, but that after hearing him he was convinced that it was the most melodious of living tongues.

About this time there appeared Mr. James Grant's 'Random Recollections.' It is amusing to read: 'I have no idea that he will ever acquire the reputation of a great statesman. His views are not sufficiently enlarged or profound for that; his celebrity in the House of Commons will chiefly depend on his readiness and dexterity as a clever debater, in conjunction with the excellence of his elocution and the gracefulness of his manner when speaking.' 'When a Select Committee of the House of Commons,' writes Sir George Stephen, 'was appointed to take evidence on the working of the apprenticeship system among the West Indian blacks, it was arranged between Buxton on the one side and Gladstone on the other that Mr. Burge and myself should be admitted as their respective legal advisers. At that time evidently Mr. Gladstone had been recognised as the champion of the one party as much as Mr. Buxton of the other.'

In the anti-slavery recollections of Sir George Stephen we have a graphic account of the struggle between Gladstone, as the advocate of slavery, and Sir John Jerome, a colonial judge, who may be said to have died a martyr to his anti-slavery zeal. 'I shall never forget,' writes Sir George, 'his examination before the Apprenticeship Committee. Gladstone employed all his ingenuity in vain, and no man has a greater share of logical acumen, to bewilder him. But Jerome was quite his match. His evidence was argumentative, and therefore the cross-examination was in the nature of argument, as it generally is in Parliamentary Committees. It was a brilliant affair of thrust and counter-thrust. Gladstone was calm, imperturbable, and deliberate; Jerome wide-awake, ready at every point, and, though full of vivacity, as impossible to catch tripping as a French rope-dancer. He evaded what he could not answer, but evaded it so adroitly that Gladstone might detect but could not expose the evasion; and every now and then Jerome retorted objection to objection with a readiness that made it difficult to say which was the examiner and which the examined. The rest of the Committee silently watched the scene, as a

conflict between two practised intellectual gladiators, and I am persuaded that Mr. Gladstone himself would admit that Jerome had not the worst of it. But if Mr. Gladstone had studied in the school of Oxford, Jerome was educated as an advocate for the French Bar, so they met on equal terms, while Jerome had the advantage of a good cause.'

Mr. Gladstone has been celebrated for his explanations. One of the earliest of them was written when he was Conservative candidate for Newark, addressed to a Mr. John Simpson, a Conservative Nonconformist. It is dated 'Hawarden, Chester, July 10, 1841.'

> 'Dear Sir,
>
> 'I am sincerely obliged by your transmitting to me the curious extract contained in your letter of the 6th, as you state that it has occasioned uneasiness to some of my constituents. It had not met my eye, but had it done so, I should have passed it over without notice, trusting to its own glaring falsity to neutralize its design, just as I remember to have passed over an amusing sketch in the *Weekly Dispatch*, shown to me by a friend, which stated that I entered public life as a Liberal, but ratted to the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel in 1834, and that I was said openly to avow my readiness to sell myself to the best bidder. I have not the least hesitation in disclaiming, in the most emphatic and stringent language that you can suggest to me, all desire to remove or abridge the civil privileges at present enjoyed by any class of my fellow-subjects, or "to exercise the civil power" for the purpose of "compelling conformity" or "extinguishing dissent." And I trust that I have already in print sufficiently disclaimed any such desire. With respect to "Puseyism," or the religious part of the question, as your letter does not refer me to it, I need not here enter upon its discussion further than to say that I consider it clearly forbidden by my duty as a member of the Church to recognise any scheme of human opinions in theology as the basis of my belief, and of my hopes for the Divine mercy, and that the sum of Christianity, in my view, is that contained in the ancient Creeds, and demonstrated by the supreme authority of Scripture. While thus briefly dismissing the question, I have no desire to evade further inquiry. What I have published upon these matters now extends to a considerable bulk, and I could not expect you to undergo the considerable labour of going through the whole of it. I have, however, desired that a copy of the third edition of my first book on the "Relations of the Church with the State" may be forwarded to you by an early opportunity. More recently I have much enlarged the work; but if you will refer to the portions relating to persecution in that volume, you will, I think, perceive that I am not among its admirers. You will find parts particularly bearing on it in Chap. II., 72–7, and Chap. VI., 5–13. This, I hope, may satisfy you without your undertaking a more extended labour.
>
> 'I remain, dear sir, your faithful servant,
> *'W. E. Gladstone.*
>
> 'You are at perfect liberty to make this letter known.'

In Parliament Mr. Gladstone defended the Irish Church, and when in the next session Mr. Hume introduced a Universities' Admission Bill, intended to enable Dissenters to attend the Universities, Mr. Gladstone strongly opposed it. Soon after came the Tory reaction, and a General Election, at which Mr. Gladstone was again returned for Newark, in conjunction, however, this time with Serjeant Wilde. The new Parliament met in February, 1835. Mr. Gladstone was then Junior Lord of the Treasury in the new Government formed by Sir Robert Peel, a Government of but very short duration. Sir Francis Doyle writes: 'When Mr. Gladstone had established himself as a rising M.P. at the Albany, he breakfasted there, and met the poet Wordsworth. The great poet sat in state surrounded by young and

enthusiastic admirers. His conversation was very like the "Excursion," turned into vigorous prose.' At this time Wilberforce, afterwards Bishop of Oxford and Winchester, wrote to him: 'It would be affectation in you, which you are above, not to know that few young men have the weight you have in the House of Commons, and are gaining rapidly through the country. Now, I do not urge you to consider this as a talent for the use of which you must render an account, for so I know you do esteem it, but what I want to urge upon you is that you should calmly look before you – see the degree of weight and influence to which you may fairly, if God spares your life and powers, look forward in future years, and thus act *now* with a view to *then*. There is no height to which you may not fairly rise in this country.' Mr. Gladstone's reply was not that of an optimist: 'The principles of civil government have decayed amongst us as much as I suspect those which are ecclesiastical, and one does not see an equally ready or sure provision for their revival. One sees in actual existence the apparatus by which our institutions are to be threatened and the very groundwork of the national character is to be broken up; but on the other hand, if we look around for the masses of principle – I mean of enlightened principle blended with courage and devotion, which are the human means of resistance —*these* I feel have yet to be organized, almost created.'

In July, 1838, Mr. W. E. Gladstone wrote to Mr. Murray, the publisher, from 6, Carlton Gardens, informing him that he has written and thinks of publishing some papers on the relationship of the Church and the State, which would probably fill a moderate octavo volume, and he would be glad to know if Mr. Murray would be inclined to see them. Mr. Murray saw the papers, and on August 9 he agreed with Mr. Gladstone to publish 750 or 1,000 copies of the work on Church and State on half-profits, the copyright to remain with the author after the first edition was sold. The work was immediately sent to press, and proofs were sent to Mr. Gladstone, about to embark for Holland. A note was received from the author, dated from Rotterdam, saying that sea-sickness prevented him from correcting the proofs on the passage. This was Mr. Gladstone's first appearance as author, and the work proved remarkably successful.

On receiving a copy of the book Sir Robert Peel exclaimed: 'With such a career before him, why should he write books?' In other quarters the book met with a warmer appreciation. Baron Bunsen wrote: 'It is the book of the times – a great event – the first since Burke that goes to the bottom of the question, far above his party and his times. I sat up till after midnight, and this morning I continued till I had read the whole. Gladstone is the first man in England as to intellectual power, and he has heard higher tones than anyone else in this land.' Dr. Arnold was delighted with it. Newman says to a friend: 'Gladstone's book, you see, is making a sensation.' Again he writes: 'The *Times* is again at poor Gladstone; really, I feel as if I could do anything for him. I have not read his book, but its consequences speak for it. Poor fellow! it is so noble a thing.'

Sir Henry Taylor wrote: 'I am reading Gladstone's book, which I shall send you, if he has not. It is closely and deeply argumentative, perhaps too much in the nature of a series of profound corollaries for a book which takes so very demonstrative a character, leaves one to expect what is impossible, and to feel drawn on by a postulate; but it is most able and profound, and written in language which cannot be excelled for clearness. It is too philosophical to be generally read, but it will raise his reputation in the opinion of those who do read it, and will not embarrass him so much in political life as a popular quotable book on such subjects might be apt to do. His party speak of him as the man who will be one day at their head, and certainly no man of his standing has yet appeared who seems likely to stand in his way. *Two wants*, *however*, *may lie across his political career – want of robust health and want of flexibility*.'

Writing to Mr. John Murray, Lord Mahon, afterwards Lord Stanhope, says: 'Mr. Gladstone's volume has lately engaged much of my attention. It is difficult to feel quite free from partiality where so amiable and excellent a man is concerned; but if my friendship does not blind me, I should pronounce his production as marked by profound ecclesiastical learning and eminent native ability. At the same time, I must confess myself startled at some of his tenets; his doctrine of Private Judgment

especially seems to me a contradiction in terms, attempting to blend together the incompatible advantages of the Romanists and of the Protestant principle upon that point.'

Two years afterwards, we find a reference to the same subject. 'As to the third edition of "The State in its Relations to the Church," I should think the remaining copies had better be got rid of in whatever summary or ignominious mode you may deem best. They must be dead beyond recall… With regard to the fourth edition, I do not know whether it would be well to procure any review or notice of it, and I am not a fair judge of its merits, even in comparison with the original form of the work; but my idea is that it is less defective, both in the theoretical and historical development, and ought to be worthy of the notice of those who deemed the earlier editions worth their notice and purchase; that it really would put a reader in possession of the view it was intended to convey, which, I fear, is more than can be said of any of its predecessors.'

Mr. Murray does not seem to have had many letters from Mr. Gladstone, though Croker mentions his having called on Mr. Murray to express his dissatisfaction on an article which appeared in the *Quarterly* on the Corn Laws. When, in 1843, the Copyright Bill was the subject of legislation, he wrote to Mr. Murray: 'I cannot omit to state that I learn from your note that steps are being taken here to back the recent proceedings of the Legislature. I must not hesitate to express my conviction that what Parliament has done will be fruitless unless the law be seconded by the adoption of such modes of publication as will allow the public here and in the colonies to obtain possession of new and popular English works at moderate prices, if it be practicable for authors and publishers to make such arrangements, I should hope to see a great extension of our book trade, as well as much advantage to literature from the measures that have now been taken, and from those which I trust we shall be enabled to take in completion of them. But unless the proceedings of the trade itself adapt and adjust themselves to the altered circumstances, I can feel no doubt that we shall relapse into or towards the old state of things – the law will be first evaded and then relaxed.' This sensible hint of Mr. Gladstone's does not seem to have been entirely thrown away – at any rate, as far as Mr. Murray was concerned.

About the same time Mr. Gladstone seems to have been not a little moved by our military proceedings in India. When Lieutenant Eyre's 'Military Operations in Cabool' appeared, Mr. Murray sent Mr. Gladstone a copy. He replied: 'I have read it with great pain and shame, which are, I fear, as one must say in such a case, the tests of its merits as a work. May another occasion for such a narrative never arise!' A humane wish, as subsequent events show, not likely to be speedily realized.

'Church and State' soon reached a third edition, and led to the famous review of it by Macaulay, in which he speaks of Gladstone as 'the rising hope of the stern and unbending Tories.' 'I have bought Gladstone's book on Church and State,' he writes to Macvey Napier, 'and I think I can make a good article on it. It seems to me the very thing for a spirited, popular, and at the same time gentlemanlike, critique.' Again he writes: 'I met Gladstone at Rome. We talked and walked together in St. Peter's during the best part of an afternoon, and I have in consequence been more civil to him personally than I otherwise should have been. He is both a clever and an able man, with all his fanaticism.' At this time Gladstone's eyesight failed him, and the doctors recommended him to spend the winter at Rome, where he met, besides Macaulay, Henry Manning and Cardinal Wiseman and Grant, who afterwards became Roman Catholic Bishop of Southwark. Among the visitors at Rome that winter were the widow and daughters of Sir Stephen Richard Glynne, of Hawarden Castle, Flintshire. Mr. Gladstone was already acquainted with these ladies, having been a friend of Lady Glynne's eldest son at Oxford and having also met him at Hawarden. The visit to Rome threw him much into their society, and he became engaged to Lady Glynne's eldest daughter.

'In 1839,' writes Sir Francis Doyle, 'I attended Mr. Gladstone's wedding at Hawarden as his best man. Catherine Glynne and her sister Mary, both beautiful women, were married on the same day – the first to William Gladstone, the second to Lord Lyttelton. The occasion was a very interesting one from the high character of the two bridegrooms and the warmth of affection shown for the two charming young ladies by all their friends and neighbours in every rank of life. There was a depth

and genuineness of sympathy diffused around which, as the French say, spoke for itself without any words.'

During the early part of their married life Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone lived with Sir Thomas Gladstone at 6, Carlton Gardens. Later they lived at 13, Carlton House Terrace, and when Mr. Gladstone was in office occupied an official residence in Downing Street. In 1850, Mr. Gladstone, who had succeeded to his patrimony five years before, bought 11, Carlton House Terrace, which was his London house for twenty years, and he subsequently lived in Harley Street, where on one occasion an angry mob smashed his windows. During the Parliamentary recess Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone divided their time between Fasque, Sir John Gladstone's seat in Kincardineshire, and Hawarden House, which they shared with Mrs. Gladstone's brother, Sir Stephen Glynne, till, on his death, it passed into their sole possession. Mr. Gladstone had a numerous family. His eldest son predeceased him; his second son is known as Herbert Gladstone; another was Henry Gladstone. One of his daughters married the Rev. Mr. Drew.

It is interesting to read what an American writer has to say of Mrs. Gladstone: 'The French have a derisive saying that there are no political women in England, and hence no salons in London. They have no appreciation of that class of Englishwomen, who are far more important and beneficial to society than are the corresponding class in France. But there is a social factor in English politics unattainable by any other nation, and possibly only under just such a form of Government and with such a ruler as Queen Victoria has proved herself to be. She is in a large sense the leader of the woman movement in her country – a movement which is represented in a stricter sense by Mrs. Gladstone, the wife of England's foremost statesman. In this movement are no diplomats or political female deputies; but women who, knowing the practical work that must be done for humanity, are about it in earnest fashion, giving the world fitting examples of their ability and power as women and workers. To better the condition of the people, not to scheme and wire-pull for a party, is the aim of women like Mrs. Gladstone, whose social power is stronger than the strongest political influence that exists.

'She is a noble woman, aside from the fact that her position is so exceptional that her faults would naturally seem trivial, surrounded by the halo of her rank and her husband's fame. As a little child she exhibited the unselfishness which has made her name beloved in England. Her father said of her that she was his most gifted child, and always spoke with subdued pride of the strong character she exhibited in earliest youth. She chose as a schoolgirl the motto, "If you want a thing well done, do it yourself," and has kept it as hers through life. The practical good sense manifested by her when young has been her magic wand through all the passing years. She is now a woman of seventy-six years, and is the same wise-minded, sensible person that she was when she wrote her chosen sentence in her diary fully seventy years ago. The story of her life would read like a beautiful romance, so full has it been of work, domestic, social, and philanthropic, and so overflowing with happiness.

'The variety and interest which have marked Mrs. Gladstone's life would have been lacking to a large extent had she not felt such an overflowing sympathy for the people – for the poor and trouble-burdened, the weary and the faint-hearted. One of her friends was once lamenting to her that she could do nothing for others because she had not means. "Oh yes, you can, my dear: you can do everything; you can love them." "But that would not help the poor or the sick or the dying," was answered. "Yes, it would; it would cheer and bless and comfort; try it and prove my words," said Mrs. Gladstone, and her visitor parted from her in tears, so heartfelt and earnest were her words.

'The story of Mr. Gladstone's public career is in part his wife's; for in all his undertakings she has been a powerful factor. Wherever he has journeyed she has gone: in whatever work he has been engaged she has been at his side, mastering details and keeping pace with him, so that she has been his comrade in all things. Mr. Gladstone at all times, and on every fitting occasion, pays tribute to the mind and heart of his wife, and attributes to her companionship and encouragement the stimulus and the solace without which he could not have undertaken the tasks he has performed. She was his "helpmeet" from their earliest union, and as time passed and their affection for each other grew

as a protecting shelter about them, he relied more and more upon her counsels. Always at his side ministering to him and diverting his mind by steady cheerfulness and bright talk, she has made his life an exceptionably joyous one, and she basks in the sunshine of the happiness she has created. For many years, while her children were growing up about her and needing her watchful care, she had manifold duties, but for a long time there has been no divided responsibility, and the accustomed way for both of them has been together, and together in a union so close that it is really that exceptional thing – a soul-marriage. She alone has shared alike in his labours and his recreations, his triumphs and defeats, and, beyond all the incidents of their united lives, her unselfish devotion has been his staff and his support.

'Mr. Gladstone's manners, especially when addressing ladies, are very courtly. There is a fine stateliness, and at the same time an exquisite courtesy, in his address. In his manners, as well as in much else, Mr. Gladstone belongs distinctly to the older school which flourished before the Queen came to the throne, when society still preserved a certain distinctive style, which has suffered much in the rush and tumble of our new democracy.'

Mr. Gladstone's 'Church Principles and Government' appeared in 1840. Macaulay writes to Napier: 'I do not think it would be wise to review it. I observed in it very little that had reference to politics – very little, indeed, that could not consistently be said by a supporter of the voluntary principle. It is, in truth, a theological treatise, and I have no mind to engage in a controversy about the nature of the Sacraments, the operation of Holy Orders, the validity of the Church, and such points of learning, except where they are connected with questions of Government. I have no disposition to split hairs about the spiritual reception of the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, or about baptismal regeneration.' However, it was subsequently reviewed in the *Edinburgh* by Henry Roger, of Spring Hill College, Birmingham, in an article on the Right of Private Judgment. Dr. Arnold writes how he was disappointed with the book. Newman writes: 'It is not open to the objections I feared; it is doctrinaire, and I think self-confident, but it will do good.' Maurice thus criticised it: 'His Aristotelianism is, it strikes me, more deeply fixed in him than before, and on that account I do not see how he can ever enter into the feeling and truths of Rationalism to refute it. His notion of attacking the Evangelicals by saying, Press your opinions to these results, and they become Rationalistic, is ingenious, and thought out, I think, with great skill and an analytical power for which I had not given him credit; but after all, it seems to me, an argument which is better for the courts than for a theological controversy.' At Eton, about this time, he was almost worshipped. When he went there to examine the candidates for the Newcastle Scholarship, one of the candidates wrote: 'I wish you to understand that Mr. Gladstone appeared not to me only but to others as a gentleman wholly unlike other examiners of school people. It was not as a politician we admired him, but as a refined Churchman deep also in political philosophy.'

In 1841 he accepted the office of Vice-President of the Board of Trade under Sir Robert Peel, afterwards becoming President as successor to Lord Ripon. In his address seeking re-election at Newark, he declared that the British farmer might rely upon two points – first, 'that adequate protection would be given to him; secondly, that protection would be given him through the means of the sliding scale.' In 1842 he was engaged in the preparation of the revised tariff, by which duties were either abolished or diminished on some twelve hundred articles. Greville writes in the March of that year that he had already displayed a capacity which made his admission into the Cabinet indispensable. In the course of the next year he became President of the Board of Trade and a member of the Cabinet, and the very first act he had to perform was to give his vote in favour of withdrawing the Bill providing for the education of children in factories, which had been violently opposed by the Dissenters on the plea that it was too favourable to the Established Church. In this connection we have the following curious story: A brusque but wealthy shipowner of Sunderland once entered the London office of Mr. Lindsay on business. 'Noo, is Lindsay in?' inquired the northern diamond in the rough. 'Sir!' exclaimed the clerk to whom the inquiry was addressed. 'Well, then, is Mr. Lindsay in, seest

thou?' 'He will be in shortly,' said the clerk. 'Will you wait?' The Sunderland shipowner intimated that he would, and was ushered into an adjacent room, where a person was busily employed copying some statistics. Our Sunderland friend paced the room several times, and presently, walking to the table where the other occupant of the room was seated, took careful note of the writer's doings. The copier looked up inquiringly, when the northerner said: 'Thou writest a bonny hand, thou dost.' 'I am glad you think so,' was the reply. 'Ah! thou dost – thou maks thy figures well; thou'rt just the chap I want.' 'Indeed,' said the Londoner. 'Yes, indeed,' said Sunderland. 'I'm a man of few words. Noo, if thou'lt coom o'er to canny auld Sunderland, thou seest, I'll gie thee a hoondred and twenty pund a year, and that's a plum thou doesn't meet with every day in thy life, I reckon – noo then.' The Londoner thanked the admirer of his penmanship most gratefully, and intimated that he would like to consult Mr. Lindsay upon the subject. 'Ah, that's reet!' And in walked Mr. Lindsay, who cordially greeted his Sunderland friend, after which the gentleman at the desk gravely rose and informed Mr. Lindsay of the handsome appointment which had been offered him in the Sunderland shipowner's office. 'Very well,' said Mr. Lindsay, 'I should be sorry to stand in your way; a hundred and twenty pound is more than I can afford to pay you in the department in which you are at present placed. You will find my friend a good and kind master, and, under the circumstances, I think the sooner you know each other the better. Allow me, therefore, to introduce to you the Right Hon. W. Gladstone.' Mr. Gladstone had been engaged in making a note of some shipping returns for his budget. The shipowner was, of course, a little taken aback, but he soon recovered his self-possession, and enjoyed the joke as much as Mr. Gladstone did. Very soon Sir Robert Peel proposed to establish non-sectarian colleges in Ireland, and to increase the grant to Maynooth. This led to Mr. Gladstone's resignation in 1845, but not before he had completed a second revised tariff, carrying on still further the work of commercial reform. In the explanation which he gave for his resignation he was understood to say that the measure with regard to Maynooth was a departure from the principles he had contended for in his books.

Everyone was amazed, and the party he had left was very angry. Greville writes: 'Gladstone's explanation was ludicrous. Everybody said that he had only succeeded in showing that his explanation was quite uncalled for.' It is perfectly clear that no one was able to understand the explanation. In a letter to Mr. W. E. Forster, Cobden wrote: 'Gladstone's speeches have the effect on my mind of a beautiful strain of music; I can rarely remember any clear unqualified expression of opinion on any subject outside his political, economical and financial statements. I remember on the occasion when he left Sir Robert Peel's Government on the Maynooth question, and when the House sat in unusual numbers to hear his explanation, I sat beside Villiers and Ricardo for an hour listening with real pleasure to his beautiful rhetorical involutions and evolutions, and at the close turning round to one of my neighbours and exclaiming, "What a marvellous talent is this! Here have I been listening with pleasure for an hour to his explanation, and I know no more why he left the Government than when he commenced."'

A little prior to this speech Mr. Gladstone had secured a follower in the person of Mr. Stafford Northcote, afterwards Lord Iddesleigh, as private secretary. 'From what I know of Mr. Gladstone's character,' writes Mr. Northcote to his father, 'there is no single statesman of the present day to whom I would more gladly attach myself; and I should think, from the talent he has shown for business since he came into office, there is no one more likely to retain his place unless any revolution takes place.' To another friend, Mr. Northcote, on his acceptance of the office, writes: 'With any other man than Gladstone I might have hesitated longer. But he is one whom I respect beyond measure; he stands almost alone as the representative of principles with which I cordially agree; and as a man of business, and one who, humanly speaking, is sure to rise, he is pre-eminent.' A little later Mr. Northcote writes to a lady: 'I look upon him' (Gladstone) 'as the representative of the party scarcely developed as yet, though secretly forming, which will stand by all that is dear and sacred, in my estimation, in the struggle which will come ere very long between good and evil, order and disorder,

the Church and the world; and I see a very small band collecting around him, and ready to fight manfully under his leading.'

In a letter to a friend, Mr. Gladstone thus explains his retirement from office: 'My whole purpose was to place myself in a position in which I should be free to consider my course without being liable to any just suspicion on the ground of personal interest. It is not profane if I say, "With a great price obtained I this freedom." The political association in which I stood was to me, at the time, the Alpha and Omega of public life. The Government of Sir Robert Peel was believed to be of immovable strength. My place, as President of the Board of Trade, was at the very kernel of its most interesting operations.. I felt myself open to the charge of being opinionated and wanting in deference to really great authorities, and I could not but see that I should be evidently regarded as fastidious and fanciful, fitter for a dreamer, or possibly a schoolman, than for the active purposes of public life in a busy and moving age.'

While at the Board of Trade Mr. Gladstone found time to devote himself as ardently as ever to ecclesiastical subjects. He was one of the party supremely interested in the establishment of an Anglican Bishop at Jerusalem. Lord Shaftesbury describes how, in connection with the event at a dinner given by Baron Bunsen, 'he' (Gladstone) 'stripped himself of a part of his Puseyite garment, and spoke like a pious man.' Bunsen, writing of Gladstone's speech, says: 'Never was heard a more exquisite speech: it flowed like a gentle and translucent stream… We drove back to town in the clearest starlight, Gladstone continuing, with unabated animation, to pour forth his harmonious thoughts in melodious tones.'

In 1845 Mr. Gladstone contemplated a visit to Ireland. 'Ireland,' he writes to an Oxford friend, 'is likely to find this country and Parliament so much occupation for years to come that I feel rather oppressively an obligation to try and see it with my own eyes, instead of using those of other people, according to the limited measure of my means.' The visit, however, was not paid. He went to see Dr. Dollinger at Munich instead.

In the winter Mr. Gladstone, while out shooting, met with an accident that necessitated the amputation of the first finger of his left hand.

It must not be forgotten that early in his official career Mr. Gladstone was Under-Secretary for the Colonies under Lord Aberdeen. Henry Taylor, who was then one of the permanent officials, writes: 'I rather like Gladstone, but he is said to have more of the devil in him than appears, in a virtuous way – that is, only self-willed. He may be all the more useful here for that. His amiable looks and manners deluded Sir James Stephen, who said that for success in public life he wanted pugnacity.' By the time he quitted office, Taylor owns that they had come to know him better. 'Gladstone left with us a paper on negro education, which confirmed me in the impression that he is a very considerable man – by far the most so of any man I have seen among our rising statesmen. He has, together with his abilities, great strength of character and excellent disposition.' In a letter to his friend Hudson Gurney, Lord Aberdeen, one of the ablest statesmen modern England has known, writes: 'In consequence of the defeat of my Under-Secretary in the county of Forfar, I have been obliged to appoint another. I have chosen a young man whom I did not know, and whom I never saw, but of whose good character and abilities I have often heard. He is the young Gladstone, and I hope he will do well. He has no easy part to play in the House of Commons, but it is a fine opening for a young man of talent and ambition, and places him in the way to the highest distinction. He appears to me so amiable that I am sure, personally, I shall like him.' It is interesting in this connection to note Mr. Gladstone's opinion of Lord Aberdeen. He thus describes the interview: 'I knew Lord Aberdeen only by public rumour. I had heard of his high character, but I had also heard of him as a man of cold manners and close and even haughty reserve. It was dusk when I entered the room, so that I saw his figure rather than his countenance, and I remember well that before I had been three minutes with him all my apprehensions had melted away like snow in the sun, and I came away from that interview conscious indeed – as who could not fail to be conscious – of his dignity, but of a dignity so tempered

by a peculiar purity and gentleness, and so associated with impressions of his kindness and even friendship, that I believe I thought more about the wonder at that time of his being so misunderstood by the outer world than about the new duties and responsibilities of my new office.' Ministers were beaten by Lord John Russell, who carried a resolution in favour of applying the surplus revenues of the Irish Church to general education, and Mr. Gladstone retired to private life, working hard at his chambers in the Albany, studying mainly Homer and Dante and St. Augustine. He went freely into society, though refusing to attend Mr. Monckton Milnes' Sunday evening parties. He was a frequent attendant at St. James's, Piccadilly, and at All Saints', Margaret Street – all the while speaking when occasion required in Parliament and working hard on Committees.

CHAPTER IV
M.P. FOR OXFORD UNIVERSITY

In 1845 the Whigs, failing to form a Cabinet, resigned, and Sir Robert Peel was again in office to carry the abolition of the Corn Laws. After resigning office, Mr. Gladstone published a pamphlet on 'Recent Commercial Legislation,' the tendency of which was in favour of the conclusion that all materials of industry should, as far as possible, be set free from Custom duties. When Lord Stanley refused to accompany his chief in the achievement of Free Trade in corn, Mr. Gladstone became, in his place, Secretary of State for the Colonies. But the Duke of Newcastle would not allow Mr. Gladstone his seat for Newark – he had turned his own son, Lord Lincoln, out of the representation of Nottingham for a similar reason – and Mr. Gladstone was out of Parliament when the question of Free Trade was being fought and won. Early in 1847 it was announced that there would be a vacancy in the representation of Oxford, and Mr. Gladstone was selected for the vacant seat. It was known to all that to represent Oxford University was Mr. Gladstone's desire, as it had been that of Canning. In May, 1847, a meeting was held in Oxford in favour of Mr. Gladstone's candidature. The canvassing went on with more than the usual excitement in a University constituency. There was an electioneering Gladstonian rhyme worth preserving. The anti-Gladstonians had difficulty in finding a candidate.

'A cipher's sought,
  A cipher's found;
His work is nought,
  His name is Round.'

The question for the electors was, as Mr. Gladstone put it, 'Whether political Oxford shall get shifted out of her palæozoic position into one more suited to her position and work as they now stand.' On August 2 Mr. Gladstone writes that he heard, not without excitement, the horse's hoofs of the messenger bearing the news of the poll. He was elected by a majority of 173 over Mr. Round, the senior member, Sir Robert Inglis, being some 700 votes in advance of him. Mr. Hope Scott has left it on record that Mrs. Gladstone was a copious worker on her husband's behalf. Sir Robert Peel went down to vote for his colleague. The venerable Dr. Routh, then nearly ninety-two years old, left his seclusion at Magdalen College to vote for him. The feeling of Mr. Gladstone's supporters may be summed up in a letter written by Dr. Moberly, afterwards Bishop of Gloucester, to a doubtful voter:

'For my own part, I certainly disapprove of Mr. Gladstone's vote on the godless colleges in Ireland, and I am not sure, even though I acknowledge the difficulties of the case, whether I approve of that respecting Maynooth; but I feel that I am not specially called on to reward or punish individual voters as to select *the deepest*, *truest*, *most attached*, *most efficient advocate for the Church and Universities* in coming, and very probably serious, dangers. I think your correspondence with Gladstone's committee has probably done great good. It is very useful that Gladstone should know that there are those who are not satisfied with some of his past acts; but surely you will not press this hitherto useful course to the extreme result of refraining from voting?'

Mr. Gladstone still continued in politics to uphold Conservative traditions, apart from Free Trade. He opposed marriage with a deceased wife's sister; he deprecated the appointment of a Commission to inquire into the Universities; but he vindicated the policy of admitting Jews to Parliament, and defended the establishment of diplomatic relations with the Court of Rome. He supported the alteration of the Parliamentary oath, but was opposed to an abstract attack on Church rates. One domestic sorrow befell him about this time, the death of a little daughter, Catherine, between four and five years old. Another difficulty which gave him much trouble was on an affair

which agitated all England at one time, and was known as the Gorham case. Mr. Gorham was an Evangelical clergyman, and the Bishop of Exeter refused to institute on the ground that his views on baptism were not sound; but in March, 1850, the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council held that his teaching was not such as to debar him from preferment in the Church of England. In a letter addressed to the Bishop of London (Bloomfield), entitled 'The Royal Supremacy viewed in the Light of Reason, History, and Common-sense,' Mr. Gladstone contended that the Royal Supremacy was not inconsistent with the spiritual life and inherent jurisdiction of the Church, and that the recent establishment of the Privy Council as a final court of appeal in religious causes was an injurious, and even dangerous, departure from the Reformation settlement. The Bishops, he held, when 'acting jointly, publicly, solemnly, responsibly, are the best and most natural organs of the judicial office of the Church in matters of heresy, and, according to reason, history, and the Constitution in that subject-matter, the fittest and safest counsellors of the Crown.' To that controversy it is due to a great extent that Mr. Hope Scott and Dr. Manning went over to the Church of Rome – the two men on whom in Church matters Mr. Gladstone principally relied. The blow was severe. 'I felt,' said Mr. Gladstone, 'as if I had lost my two eyes.'

In this year Mr. Gladstone was very much depressed. Sir Stafford Northcote writes: 'He (Gladstone) was out of spirits himself about public matters, and did not paint Parliamentary life in rose colour… He is distressed at the position Peel has taken up, and at the want of sympathy between those who had acted for so many years cordially together, and he looks forward to serious Church troubles, which he thinks might possibly drive him out of Parliament.' An idea which, had it been carried out, would have deprived the world of Mr. Gladstone's greatest triumphs, political and oratorical. In that year came up the Don Pacifico affair, and Lord Palmerston's triumph by means of the *Romanus civis sum* dictum, against which Mr. Gladstone thundered. It was, as Lord Palmerston admitted, a first-rate performance, appealing to the law of Nature and of God, and deprecating the vain conception that we, forsooth, have a mission to be the censors of vice and folly, of abuse and imperfection, among the other countries of the world, a doctrine which Mr. Gladstone subsequently seemed altogether to have departed from.

On the lamented death of Sir Robert Peel, Mr. Gladstone bore eloquent testimonies to the merits of that great man.

In the following winter Mr. Gladstone was in Naples, taken there by the illness of one of his children, for whom the medical men had recommended a warmer climate, and thence he addressed to the Earl of Aberdeen those letters denouncing the atrocities of the Italian Government which for the first time made Mr. Gladstone popular with the English people.

On his return, he found the country excited to a temporary fury, because the Pope had planned Roman Bishops in English counties. To meet it, Lord John Russell carried an Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, which Mr. Gladstone powerfully attacked, and which some twenty years after he had the pleasure of quietly repealing. But the Bill proved a death-blow to Lord John Russell's hold on office, weakened as it was by Lord Palmerston's retirement, in consequence of his unauthorized recognition of Louis Napoleon's *coup d'état*. Lord Derby came into office, and there was a General Election.

Mr. Gladstone was sent by Lord Derby as a Lord Commissioner to the Ionian Islands, to carry out needed reforms in that part of the world, Her Majesty Queen Victoria having refused her assent to the petition of the Ionian Parliament for union with Greece. But Mr. Gladstone was to reform the Ionian Parliament, so as to make it resemble as much as possible that of England. When he left, his successor, Sir H. Stocks, wrote: 'Gladstone is regretted by many, respected by all. Nothing could have been better than the firmness, judgment, and temper and talent he has shown. It sometimes staggers me to reflect that I have to succeed him.'

It was about this time that M. Thiers paid England a visit, having left France in consequence of the *coup d'état*. A dinner was made up for him, at which were present Mr. Gladstone, Bulwer the novelist, Lord Elcho, Lord Herbert of Lea, Mr. Hayward, and others. The conversation was varied

and animated. Mr. Hayward writes: 'Thiers had the advantage of language and choice of subject, but the general opinion was that Mr. Gladstone was, if anything, the superior conversationalist of the two.'

When the election of 1852 approached, the opponents of Mr. Gladstone, thinking that his friends might have been alienated by his votes on Jewish disabilities and on the Papal Aggressions Bill, brought forward a third candidate for the University, Dr. Marsham, of Merton, in spite of a declaration signed by 1,276 members; but Mr. Gladstone managed to secure a majority of 350. In the debate in November Mr. Gladstone attacked Mr. Disraeli's Budget, and at the election following the Tories again attacked Mr. Gladstone's seat. The opposition was a curious affair – the result of an obscure intrigue – Lord Crompton being put forward apparently without his consent and against his wish. Then Mr. Percival was suddenly brought forward. Mr. Gladstone, however, on a small poll, had a majority of 87, and his seat was saved for the time. As a rule, a University M.P. is supposed to hold his seat for life.

By this time the Tories had become outrageous against Mr. Gladstone. After the defeat of the Derby Government, some of them gave a dinner to Major Beresford at the Carlton, who had been charged with bribery at the Derby election, and had been acquitted. 'After dinner,' writes Mr. Greville, 'when they got drunk, they went upstairs, and found Mr. Gladstone alone in the drawing-room. Some of them proposed to throw him out of the window. This they did not quite dare do, but contented themselves with giving an insulting message or order to the waiter, and then went away.' But Mr. Gladstone remained a member of the club till 1859. On the Coalition Government being formed under Lord Aberdeen, Mr. Gladstone became Chancellor of the Exchequer. His Budget speech, five hours long, held the House spell-bound. It was devoted mainly to remission of taxation. The deficiency thus created was made up by the application of the legacy duty to real property, by an increase of the duty on spirits, and by an extension of the income-tax at 5d. in the pound to all incomes between £100 and £150. The Irish were indignant at the tax being extended to Ireland. One of the few genuine Irish patriots, Mr. J. O'Neil Daunt, writes: 'One of Mr. Gladstone's arguments is curious from its dishonest ingenuity. He extracts from our poverty a pretext for disarming us. Pitt and Castlereagh promised at the Union that Irish taxation should not be approximated to British until an increased prosperity should enable us to bear the increased burden. The prosperity has not come, but the tax must be got. If, says Gladstone, you have not got wealth to be mulcted, your poverty will answer me quite as well. For the purchasing power of £150 is greater in a poor country than a rich one; whence he argues that, as Ireland is poor, an Irish income of £150 is a fitter subject of taxation than an income of equal amount in England. The peculiar beauty of this argument is, that the poorer a country is, the stronger is the force of argument for taxing it.' Evidently Mr. Gladstone's Budget found more favour in English than in Irish eyes. The income-tax, said Mr. Gladstone, was to expire in 1860. Alas! he did not then foresee the Crimean War. On the contrary, everything seemed to betoken a happy future.

In May, 1853, Mr. Greville records an interview he had with Sir James Graham. 'Graham seemed in excellent spirits about their political state and prospects, all owing to Gladstone and the complete success of the Budget. The long and numerous Cabinets, which were attributed in the *Times* to disunion, were occupied in minute consideration of the Budget, which was there fully discussed; and Gladstone spoke in the Cabinet one day for three hours, rehearsing his speech in the House of Commons, though not quite at such length… He talked of a future head, as Aberdeen is always quite ready to retire; but it is very difficult to find anyone to succeed him. I suggested Gladstone. He shook his head, and said it would not do. He spoke of the great mistakes Derby had made. Gladstone's object certainly was for a long time to be at the head of the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and to join with Derby, who might, in fact, have had all the Peelites, if he had chosen to ally himself with them instead of Disraeli. The latter had been the cause of the ruin of the party.'

In the same year Bishop Wilberforce wrote: 'Lord Aberdeen is now growing to look upon Gladstone as his successor, and so told Gladstone the other day.'

A little while after we find Lord Aberdeen saying: ‘Gladstone intends to be Prime Minister. He has great qualifications, but some serious defects. The chief is that when he has convinced himself, perhaps, by abstract reasoning of some view, he thinks that everyone ought at once to see as he does, and can make no allowance for difference of opinion. Gladstone must thoroughly recover his popularity. The Queen has quite got over her feeling against him, and likes him much… I have told Gladstone that when he is Prime Minister I will have a seat in his Cabinet, if he desires it, without an office.’

CHAPTER V
MR. GLADSTONE'S ECCLESIASTICAL OPINIONS

In April, 1856, Mr. Greville writes of a conversation he had with Graham: 'He began talking over the state of affairs generally. He says there is not one man in the House of Commons who has ten followers – neither Gladstone, nor Disraeli, nor Palmerston.. that Gladstone is certainly the ablest man there. His religious opinions, in which he is zealous and sincere, enter so largely into his political conduct as to form a very serious obstacle to his success, for they are abhorrent to the majority of this Protestant country, and (I was surprised to hear him say) Graham thinks approach very nearly to Rome.'

While absorbed in politics, or literature, or society, Mr. Gladstone never forgot to do his duty to the best of his ability as a loyal son of the Church of England. In 1842 there was a fight at Oxford University on the choice of a Professor of Poetry for the University. One candidate was dear to the High Church party, the other to the Low, or Evangelical, of which Lord Ashley was the head. Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Sandon, urging him to entreat Lord Ashley to avoid, for the Church's sake, the scandal of a contest. But Lord Ashley was on the winning side, and his candidate was returned at the head of the poll.

In 1843, in the debates on the Dissenters' Chapel Bill, Lord Ashley writes: 'That inexplicable Mr. Gladstone contended that all Dissent was semi-Arian, and that a vast proportion of the founders were, in fact, Unitarians.' When, in 1845, Mr. Ward was condemned at Oxford for his book, 'The Ideal of a Christian Church,' Mr. Gladstone was one of the *non-placets*. In a letter to his friend Bishop Wilberforce in 1844, Mr. Gladstone writes: 'I rejoice to see that you are on the whole hopeful. For my part, I heartily go along with you. The fabric consolidates itself more and more, even while the earthquake rocks it; for, with a thousand drawbacks and deductions, love grows warmer and larger, truth firmer among us. It makes the mind sad to speculate on the question how much better all might have been, but our mourning should be turned into joy and thankfulness while we think also how much worse it might have been. It seems to me to be written for our learning and use: "He will be very gracious unto thee at the voice of thy cry; when He shall hear it, He will answer thee. And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy teachers: and thine ears shall hear a word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it.'"

About this time Mr. Gladstone seems to have taken a leading part in the establishment of the High Church College, Glenalmond, instituted for the purpose of turning Presbyterian Scotland from the errors of its ways. At that time Mr. Gladstone was still in bondage. He argued for the maintenance of the Established Church in Ireland. Mr. Gladstone had not advanced beyond his party, and belonged to the school immortalized in 'Tom Jones.' 'When I mention religion,' says the Rev. Mr. Thwackum, 'I mean the Christian religion, and not only the Christian religion, but the Protestant religion, and not only the Protestant religion, but the Church of England.'

In opening the Liverpool Collegiate Institution, he pleaded earnestly for Christian teaching. 'If you could erect a system,' he said, 'which presents to man all branches of knowledge save the one that is essential, you would only be building up a tower of Babel, which, when you had completed it, would be the more signal in its fall, and which would bury those who had raised it in its ruins. We believe that if you can take a human being in his youth, and make him an accomplished man in natural philosophy, in mathematics, or in the knowledge necessary for the profession of a merchant, a lawyer, or a physician; that if in any or all of these endowments you could form his mind – yes, if you could endow him with the power and science of a Newton, and so send him forth, and if you had concealed from him – or, rather, had not given him – a knowledge and love of the Christian faith, he

would go forth into the world, able, indeed, with reference to those purposes of science, successful with the accumulation of wealth for the multiplication of more, but poor and miserable and blind and naked with reference to everything that constitutes the true and sovereign purpose of our existence – nay, worse with respect to the sovereign purpose than if he had still remained in the ignorance which we all commiserate, and which it is the object of this institute to assist in removing.'

But Mr. Gladstone was moving. When Lord John Russell brought in a Bill to admit Jews to Parliament, Mr. Gladstone supported it, though at one time against it.

In 1850 Mr. Gladstone wrote a letter to Bishop Hampden, which threw a good deal of light on his mental working. He wrote: 'Your lordship will probably be surprised at receiving a letter from me. The simple purport of it is to discharge a debt of the smallest possible importance to you, yet due, I think, from me, by expressing the regret with which I now look back on my concurrence in a vote of the University of Oxford in the year 1836, condemnatory of some of your lordship's publications. I did not take actual part in the vote, but, upon reference to a journal kept at the time, I find that my absence was owing to an accident. For a good many years past I have found myself ill able to master books of an abstract character, and I am far from presuming at this time to form a judgment on the merits of any proposition then at issue. I have learned, indeed, that many things which in the forward precipitancy of my youth I should have condemned are either in reality sound or lie within the just bounds of such discussion as justly befits a University. But that which (after a delay due, I think, to the cares and pressing occupations of political life) brought back to my mind the injustice of which I had unconsciously been guilty in 1836 was my being called upon as a member of the Council of King's College in London to concur in a measure similar in principle with respect to Mr. Maurice – that is to say, in a condemnation couched in general terms, which really did not declare the point of imputed guilt, and against which perfect innocence could have no defence. I resisted to the best of my power, though ineffectually, the grievous wrong done to Mr. Maurice, and urged that the charges should be made distinct, that all the best means of investigation should be brought to bear on them, ample opportunity given for defence, and a reference then made, if needful, to the Bishop in his proper capacity of layman, as the Council were inexorable. It was only, as I have said, after mature reflection that I came to perceive the bearing of the case on that of 1836, and to find that by my resistance I had condemned myself. I then lamented that on that occasion, now so remote, I had not felt and acted in a different manner. I beg your lordship to accept this, the expression of my cordial regret.' Dr. Hampden had published certain lectures which afterwards were strongly objected to by the Tractarian party, whose triumph led to a good deal of bitterness, hard to understand now.

Again, in March, 1865, when Mr. Dillwyn moved that 'the present position of the Irish Church is unsatisfactory, and calls for the earliest attention of Her Majesty's Government,' Mr. Gladstone replied that they were not prepared to deny the abstract truth of the former part of the resolution, while they could not accept the resolution. The Irish Church as she then stood was in a false position. She ministered only to one eighth or one ninth of the community. The debate was adjourned, and not resumed during the remainder of the session; but the speech of the Chancellor of the Exchequer caused great excitement, and Mr. (afterwards Chief Justice) Whiteside promptly denounced it as fatal to the Established Church of Ireland. Sir Stafford Northcote wrote: 'Gladstone made a terrible long stride in his downward progress last night, and denounced the Irish Church in a way that shows how by-and-by he will deal not only with it, but the Church of England, too.. was evidently annoyed that his colleagues had decided on opposing Dillwyn's motion. He laid down the doctrine that the tithes were national property… It is plain that he must hold that the tithe of Wales, where the Dissenters are in a minority, does not properly belong to the Church; and by-and-by we shall find that he will carry the principle a great deal further. It is sad to see what he is coming to.'

Tory suspicion soon found a vent; an election was at hand, and Mr. Gladstone's seat for Oxford University was in danger. As early as 1861 the question of his retirement had been mooted. In that year he wrote to the Rector of Exeter College: 'I have never forgotten the ties which bind me to my

kind and good-natured supporters in the University, and no prospect elsewhere could induce me to quit them, unless I could think that at a juncture like this they might, with every prospect of success, support a candidate who would fill my place to their full and general satisfaction… To quit Oxford under any circumstances would be to me a most sad, even if it ever became a prudent and necessary, measure.'

As a further illustration of Mr. Gladstone's Liberal opinions, and his unfitness for Oxford, I quote from a letter of his to Bishop Wilberforce on Mr. Hadfield's proposal in the House of Commons to abolish the declaration made by Mayors that they would not use their office against the Established Church. 'As I apprehend the matter, no one is obliged to take this declaration at all. I took it myself last year, as Elder Brother of the Trinity House, in which I have no duty whatever to discharge, except, I believe, to appoint an "almsbody" once in five or ten years. As Chancellor of the Exchequer I have not taken it. An annual Act of Indemnity passes with your consent to dispense with it, and all who choose avail themselves of the dispensation. I put it to you that this declaration ought not to be maintained upon the Statute Book. If it is right to require of certain persons that they should declare something on behalf of the Established Church, the law, and not the individual, should define who those persons should be. An established legal *præmunire* of self-exception is fatal to the law. If you are right in saying (which I have never heard elsewhere) that men wish to escape the declaration in order that they may carry their municipal paraphernalia in state to Dissenting chapels, it is plain that they can do it now, and therefore the declaration cannot be maintained on the ground that it prevents them, for it does not. If I am told that the mere abstract existence of such a declaration, counteracted as it is by the indemnity, deters the flesh and blood of Dissenting Mayors from such a use of the *paraphernalia*, such a reply appears to me fanciful. In short, if this Bill is not to be supported, it appears to me better to profess thorough-going exclusiveness at once, and to say that nothing shall be yielded except to force, for that is what the whole matter comes to… It is quite obvious that if the consideration of these measures is to be approached in such a frame of mind, we shall be doing in our day simply what Eldon and Inglis did in theirs. I must say that is not my idea of my stewardship.'

Again, he writes to the Bishop: 'The policy of the Church as an establishment to my mind is plain. She should rest on her possessions and her powers, parting with none of them, except for equivalents in another currency, or upon full consideration of *pros* and *cons*; but outside of these she should avoid all points of sore contact with Dissenters. Each one of them is a point at which she as a dead mass rubs upon the living flesh, and stirs the hostility of its owner. It is no less due to her own interests to share them than it is to justice as regards the Dissenter to surrender these points – if surrender that is to be called which is so unmixedly to her advantage.'

In 1865 the Oxford University election resulted in the loss by Mr. Gladstone of his seat. The opposition to him was headed by Archdeacon Denison, on account of his conduct on the Education Question. Mr. Gladstone was defeated by Mr. Hardy, but he was defeated by those members of the constituency who had the least interest in education. Nearly all the professors, tutors, and lecturers voted in the minority, but were outnumbered by the country clergy. 'Of course,' writes Bishop Wilberforce to Mr. Gladstone, 'if half of these men had known what I know of your real devotion to our Church, that would have outweighed their hatred to a Government which gave Waldegrave to Carlisle, and Baring to Durham, and the youngest Bishop on the Bench to York, and supported Westbury in denying the faith of our Lord. But they could not be made to understand the truth, and have inflicted on the University and the Church the gross indignity of rejecting the best, noblest, and truest son of each, in order to punish Shaftesbury' – supposed to be Palmerston's Bishop-maker – 'and Westbury. You were too great for them.'

Mr. Gladstone's reply was as follows:

'Do not conceal from yourself that my hands are very much weakened. It is only as representing Oxford that a man whose opinions are disliked and suspected could expect or could have a title to be heard. I look upon myself now as a person wholly extraneous on one great class of questions; with

respect to legislative and Cabinet measures, I am a unit. I have had too much of personal collision with Westbury to be a fair judge in his case, but in your condemnation of him as respects attacks on Christian doctrines do not forget either what coadjutors he has had or with what pitiful and lamentable indifference not only the Christian public, but so many of the clergy – so many of the warmest religionists – looked on. Do not join with others in praising me because I am not angry, only sorry, and that deeply… There have been two great deaths or transmigrations of spirit in my political career – one very slow, the breaking of ties with my original party; the other very short and sharp, the breaking of my tie with Oxford. There will probably be a third, and no more.'

In a subsequent letter Mr. Gladstone states to the Bishop his fixed determination never to take any step to raise himself 'to a higher level in official life; and this not on grounds of Christian self-denial, which would hardly apply, but on the double ground, first, of my total ignorance of my capacity, bodily or mental; and secondly, perhaps I might say specially, because I am certain that the fact of my taking it would seal my doom in taking it.' The Bishop and Mr. Gladstone seem ever to have been on the most confidential terms.

In a subsequent debate on Church rates Mr. Gladstone, while opposing an abstract resolution on the subject, declared that he felt as strongly as anyone the desirability of settling the question. The evils attending the present system were certainly enormous, and it was a fact that we had deviated from the original intention of the law, which was not to oppose a mere uncompensated burden on anyone, but a burden from which everyone bearing it should receive a benefit, so that while each member of the community was bound to contribute his quota to the Church, every member of the Church was entitled to go to the churchwardens and demand a free place to worship his Maker. The case then was, especially in towns, that the centre and best parts of the church were occupied by pews exclusively for the middle classes, while the labouring classes were jealously excluded from every part of sight and hearing in the churches, and were treated in a manner which it was most painful to reflect upon.

Sir George Lewis predicted that the death of Peel would have the effect upon Gladstone of removing a weight from a spring, and the worthy Baronet judged correctly. 'He will come forward more and more, and take more part in discussion. The general opinion is that Gladstone will give up his Free Trade and become leader of the Protectionists.' It was not so; Mr. Gladstone had been a puzzle and wonder to his contemporaries. It puzzled the gigantic intellect of a Brougham to understand, not why Mr. Gladstone gave up office when Sir Robert Peel proposed to increase the grant to Maynooth, but Mr. Gladstone's explanation of his conduct. Mrs. Charlotte Wynne, no superficial observer, wrote: 'Mr. Gladstone has been given two offices to keep him quiet, by giving him too much to do to prevent his troubling his head about the Church; but,' adds the lady, 'I know it will be in vain, for to a speculative mind like his theology is a far more inviting and extensive field than any that is offered by the Board of Trade.' This trait of his character especially came out when he opposed the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill, hurried through Parliament in a panic because the Pope had given English titles to his Bishops in England. Mr. Gladstone ever loved to talk of theology, and in 1870 we find him in Dr. Parker's pulpit in the City Temple describing preachers – especially Dr. Newman, who, with his deep piety and remarkable gifts of mind, he described as an object of great interest, and Dr. Chalmers. Their very idiosyncrasies, Mr. Gladstone argued, were in their favour. In 1870, when Mr. Gladstone went to Mill Hill to address the scholars at the Dissenting Grammar School there, he ended with an appeal to the lads above all things to strive after Christian growth and perfection. Early Mr. Gladstone learned to give up his prejudices against Dissenters. Often has he confessed that they are the most efficient supporters and source of strength. Miss Martineau was a Dissenter, yet he went out of his way to offer her a pension which she declined. To hear Mr. Gladstone read the lessons, all the country round flocked to Hawarden Church when the owner of the hall was at home. People laughed when Lord Beaconsfield on a memorable occasion declared that he was on the side of the angels. When Mr. Gladstone spoke on religious topics, people listened to him with respect, because they felt that in all his utterances he was sincere. Of his Christian liberality of sentiment we have a

further illustration when he and his son went to hear Mr. Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher. The event is thus recorded; it took place in the beginning of the year 1882: 'On Sunday evening last Mr. Gladstone and his eldest son were present at the service in Mr. Spurgeon's tabernacle, and occupied Mrs. Spurgeon's pew. Both before and after the service these distinguished gentlemen were together in the pastor's vestry. Mr. Gladstone shook hands heartily with the elders and deacons present, and expressed himself highly delighted with the service. The visit was strictly private, and Mr. Gladstone and his son walked back to Downing Street.' Many were the varying comments on the event. In the chief Opposition paper a writer recalled the fact that many years ago Mr. Spurgeon expressed a wish that the Church of England might grow worse in order that she soon might be got rid of. He then argued that if Mr. Gladstone's sympathy with Mr. Spurgeon is what his presence at the Tabernacle would imply, we have a satisfactory explanation of the unsatisfactory character of Mr. Gladstone's ecclesiastical appointments. Mr. Spurgeon is a foe to the Church; Mr. Gladstone goes to hear him, therefore he is a foe of the Church. Mr. Gladstone, being a foe of the Church, appoints as Bishops, Deans and Canons the men who will do the Church most mischief. Of course, the *Saturday Review* did its best to make Mr. Gladstone ridiculous in connection with the affair. 'Some jealousy may be aroused in rival Bethels by this announcement, which is, we believe, the first of its kind. But it may possibly be that Mr. Gladstone is going to take a course, and that he will distribute the steps of that course equally among the various tabernacles of his stanchest supporters. The battle of the Constitution is to be fought out in the precincts of Ebenezer, and Ebenezer must be accordingly secured. Mr. Gladstone's plan is unquestionably a wise one.' The *Saturday Review* wanted to know what made Mr. Gladstone shake hands so heartily with the deacons. 'A proceeding somewhat similar to Mr. Perkes's plan for winning an election.' Perhaps it is in one of Mr. Gladstone's letters to Bishop Wilberforce that we get a clear idea of his view of the Church of England. In 1857 he wrote: 'It is neither Disestablishment nor even loss of dogmatic truth which I look upon as the greatest danger before us, but it is the loss of those elementary principles of right and wrong on which Christianity must itself be built. The present position of the Church of England is gradually approximating to the Erastian theory that the business of the Establishment is to teach all sorts of doctrines, and to provide Christian ordinances by way of comfort for all sorts of people, to be used at their own option. It must become, if uncorrected, in lapse of time a thoroughly immoral position. Her case seems to be like that of Cranmer – to be disgraced first and then burned. Now, what I feel is that the constitution of the Church provides the means of bringing controversy to issue; not means that can be brought at all times to bear, but means that are to be effectually, though less determinately, available for preventing the general devastation of doctrine, either by a positive heresy or by that thesis I have named above, worse than any heresy. Considering that the constitution of the Church with respect to doctrine is gradually growing into an offence to the moral sense of mankind, and that the question is, Shall we get, if we can, the means of giving expression to that mind? I confess that I cannot be repelled by fears connected with the state of the Episcopal Bench from saying Yes. Let me have it if I can, for, regarding the Church as a privileged and endowed body, no less than one with spiritual prerogatives, I feel these two things – if the mind of those who rule and of those who compose the Church is deliberately anti-Catholic, I have no right to seek a hiding place within the pale of her possessions by keeping her in a condition of voicelessness in which all are entitled to be there because none are. That is, viewing her with respect to the enjoyment of her temporal advantages, spiritually how can her life be saved by stopping her from the exercise of functions essential to her condition? It may be said she is sick; wait till she is well. My answer is, She is getting more and more sick in regard to her own function of authoritatively declaring the truth; let us see whether her being called upon so to declare it may not be the remedy, or a remedy, at least. I feel certain that the want of combined and responsible ecclesiastical action is one of the main evils, and that the regular duty of such action will tend to check the spirit of individualism and to restore that belief in a Church we have almost lost.'

Of colonial Bishops Mr. Gladstone had a high admiration. In 1876 he wrote: 'It is indeed, I fear, true that a part – not the whole – of our colonial episcopate have sunk below the level established for it five-and-thirty years ago by the Bishops of those days. But how high a level it was! and how it lifted the entire heart of the Church of England!'

Here it is as well to give some further particulars as to Mr. Gladstone's action with regard to Church matters. In 1836 Mr. Gladstone left the Church Pastoral Aid Society, of which he had become one of the vice-presidents, in consequence of an attempt to introduce lay agency. At all times he was ready to guard and vindicate the religious character of his alma mater. On one occasion Lord Palmerston had expressed a reasonable dislike of a system which compelled the undergraduates 'to go from wine to prayers, and from prayers to wine.' Mr. Gladstone, in reply, said he had a better opinion of the undergraduates who had been so lately his companions. He did not believe that even in their most convivial moments they were unfit to enter the house of prayer. Mr. Gladstone was one of a committee which met at the lodgings of Mr. (afterwards Sir Thomas) Acland in Jermyn Street, which led to the formation of Boards of Education for the different dioceses, and to the establishment of training colleges, with the double aim of securing religious education for the middle classes and the collegiate education of the schoolmasters.

Mr. Gladstone's ecclesiastical leanings soon brought him back to Parliamentary life, in connection with Archbishop Tait's Public Worship Regulation Bill. The grounds of his opposition he affirmed in the following resolutions:

'1. That in proceeding to consider the grounds for the Regulation of Public Worship this House cannot do otherwise than take into view the lapse of more than two centuries since the enactment of the present rubrics of the Common Prayer-Book of the Church of England; the multitude of particulars combined in the conduct of Divine service under their provisions; the doubt occasionally attaching to their interpretation, and the number of points they are thought to have left undecided; the diversities of local custom which under these circumstances have long prevailed; and the unreasonableness of proscribing all varieties of opinion and usage among the many thousands of congregations of the Church distributed throughout the land.

'2. That this House is therefore reluctant to place in the hands of any single Bishop – on the motion of one or more persons, however defined – greatly increased facilities towards procuring an absolute ruling of many points hitherto left open and reasonably allowing of diversity, and thereby enforcing the establishment of an inflexible rule of uniformity throughout the land, to the prejudice in matters indifferent of the liberty now practically existing.

'3. That the House willingly acknowledges the great and exemplary devotion of the clergy in general to their sacred calling, but is not on that account the less disposed to guard against the indiscretions or thirst for power of other individuals.

'4. That this House is therefore willing to lend its best assistance to any measure recommended by adequate authority, with a view to provide more effectual security against any neglect of, or departure from, strict law which may give evidence of a design to alter, without the consent of the nation, the spirit or the substance of revealed religion.

'5. That in the opinion of this House it is also to be desired that the members of the Church having a legitimate interest in her services should receive ample protection against precipitate and arbitrary changes of established customs by the sole will of the clergyman and against the wishes locally prevalent amongst them, and that such protection does not appear to be afforded by the provisions of the Bill now before the House.

'6. That the House attaches a high value to the concurrence of Her Majesty's Government with the ecclesiastical authorities in the initiative of legislation affecting the Established Church.'

In moving these resolutions, Mr. Gladstone's speech was of the highest interest and importance; 'but never, perhaps, in his long career,' writes the biographer of Archbishop Tait, 'did his eloquence so completely fail to enlist the sympathy even of his own supporters, and the resolutions were withdrawn.'

The Bill, opposed by Dr. Pusey on one side and Lord Shaftesbury on the other, was carried in a modified form. Eye-witnesses have described the debate on the second reading: 'The House, jaded with a long and anxious sitting, was eager to divide. A clear voice was heard above the clamour. It was Mr. Hussey Vivian, an old and tried friend of Mr. Gladstone. He rose to warn him not to persist in his amendments; not twenty men on his own side of the House would follow him into the Lobby. Already deft lieutenants, mournful of aspect, had brought slips of paper to their chief, fraught, it seemed, with no good tidings. When the Speaker put the question, there was no challenge for a division. Amid a roar of mixed cheers and laughter, the six resolutions melted away into darkness.'

Sir William Harcourt was one of Mr. Gladstone's principal opponents in the course of the debate. In Committee there was rather an amusing passage of arms between Mr. Gladstone and his old Attorney-General. Sir William espoused the Bill strongly, and implored Mr. Disraeli to come to the rescue. 'We have,' he said, 'a leader of the House who is proud of the House of Commons, and of whom the House of Commons is proud.' A provision had been introduced into the Bill which would have overthrown the Bishops' right of veto on proceedings to be instituted in the New Court. This provision Mr. Gladstone vehemently opposed, and quoted from the canonist Van Espero. Sir William ridiculed the quotations, and accused Mr. Gladstone at the eleventh hour of having come back to wreck the Bill. Two days after he again attacked Mr. Gladstone, and quoted authorities in support of his views. Mr. Gladstone's reply was complete.

At this time Mr. Gladstone was much occupied with his favourite ecclesiastical subjects. In an article on 'Ritual and Ritualism,' contributed to the *Contemporary Review*, he contended for the lawfulness and expediency of moderate ritual in the services of the Church of England. He returned to Church questions in a second article entitled 'Is the Church of England worth Preserving?' – a question which, of course, he answered in the affirmative. In the course of his remarks he created a perfect storm of indignation on the part of the Roman Catholics. To meet this Mr. Gladstone published a pamphlet called 'The Vatican Decrees in their Bearing on Civil Allegiance.' One hundred and twenty thousand copies of the pamphlet were sold in a few weeks, and the press was filled with replies. Mr. Gladstone returned to the charge in a pamphlet entitled 'Vaticanism,' in which he contended that in theory the Papal Infallibility was inconsistent with the requirements of civil allegiance. In connection with this subject, let it be briefly stated that in 1880, when Mr. Gladstone returned to power, one of the first things to be settled was the Dissenters' Burial Bill, a subject first brought before the House of Commons by Sir Morton Peto in 1861. The Bill was finally piloted through the House of Commons by Mr. Osborne Morgan, Judge Advocate. Perhaps by this time Mr. Gladstone had become tired of ecclesiastical difficulties. In a letter to the Lord Chancellor respecting fresh legislation on the part of the Archbishop of Canterbury, Mr. Gladstone wrote: 'The thing certainly could not be done by the authority of the Cabinet, were the Cabinet disposed to use it, of which at present I can say nothing.'

About this time a church was built at Stroud Green, near Finsbury Park, at a cost of £11,000, £8,000 of which was contributed by the parishioners and their friends. It was an Evangelical or Low church, but when, on the incumbent's retirement, Mr. Gladstone, claiming the presentation on behalf of the Crown, thought fit to appoint as Vicar a clergyman whose antecedents proved him to be commonly known as ritualistic, the parishioners protested. Petitions against Mr. Linklater's appointment, signed by 2,300 petitioners and members of the congregation, were presented to Mr. Gladstone. The following is a quotation from a letter written by the late Vicar: 'There is a very widespread anxiety through the congregation that the church which their money has built should not pass into the hands of one who does not hold the same Evangelical views, or favour the same simple ritual to which they have been accustomed.' The Bishop also appealed and remonstrated; all was in vain. On August 23, 1885, Mr. Linklater was inducted to the charge of the parish. A majority of the seat-holders at once relinquished their seats; others, we are told, have since followed their example, and some who remained in hope of better things are obliged to acknowledge that their hopes are disappointed. The services most prized by the congregation have been discontinued, and

other services introduced which are believed to be unscriptural, contrary to the laws ecclesiastical, and opposed to the plain directions of the Book of Common Prayer.

CHAPTER VI
MR. GLADSTONE AND THE DIVORCE BILL

In 1857 there occurred a memorable passage of arms between Mr. Gladstone and Sir Richard Bethell – afterwards Lord Westbury – on the subject of divorce. More than one Commission had reported in favour of establishing a separate court, so that the dissolution of marriage might be effected by judicial separation instead of a special Act of Parliament. By this change the expense incident to the existing procedure would be materially reduced, and the remedy which lay within the reach of the wealthy would be extended to the poor. As the law stood, the privilege of obtaining a relief from the marriage tie depended on a mere property qualification. If a man had £1,000 to spend, he might rid himself of an unfaithful wife; if not, he must remain her husband.

The absurdity of the law was well put by Mr. Justice Maule. A hawker who had been convicted of bigamy urged in extenuation that his wife had been unfaithful to him and deserted him, and that was why he had to take a second wife. In passing sentence, the judge, addressing the prisoner, said: 'I will tell you what you ought to have done under the circumstances, and if you say you did not know, I must tell you that the law conclusively presumes you did. You should have instructed your attorney to bring an action against the seducer of your wife for damages; that would have cost you about £100. Having succeeded thus far, you should have employed a proctor, and instituted a suit in the Ecclesiastical Court for a divorce *a mensâ et thoro*; that would have cost you £200 or £300 more. When you had obtained a divorce *a mensâ et thoro*, you had only to obtain a private Act for a divorce *a vinculo matrimonii*. The Bill might possibly have been opposed in all its stages in both Houses of Parliament, and altogether these proceedings would have cost you £1,000. You will probably tell me that you never had a tenth of that sum, but that makes no difference. Sitting here as an English judge, it is my duty to tell you that this is not a country in which there is one law for the rich and another for the poor. You will be imprisoned for one day.'

The long-postponed Bill was introduced into the Lords, where it passed after unflagging opposition from Bishop Wilberforce. July 24 was the date fixed for its second reading in the House of Commons, but no sooner had the Attorney-General (Bethell) risen to explain the Bill than Mr. Henley interposed with a motion that it be read again in a month. He was supported in this unusual proceeding in a speech of great length and energy by Mr. Gladstone. The motion was negatived by a large majority. On July 30 the Attorney-General made his proposed statement. In the course of his speech he pointedly alluded to Mr. Gladstone as a great master of eloquence and subtle reasoning. 'If that right hon. gentleman had lived – thank Heaven he had not – in the Middle Ages, when invention was racked to find terms of eulogium for the *subtilissimi doctores*, how great would have been his reputation!' The case against the Bill was presented with the most telling force by Mr. Gladstone. He began by urging the strong feeling against the Bill, and the great danger of precipitancy on legislating in such a House under Government pressure. The Bill undertook to deal not only with the civil consequences and responsibilities of marriage, but also to determine religious obligations and to cancel the most solemn vows; while, though not invested with any theological authority, it set itself up as a square and measure of the consciences of men. 'I must confess,' continued Mr. Gladstone, 'that there is no legend, there is no fiction, there is no speculation, however wild, that I should not deem it rational to admit into my mind rather than allow what I conceive to be one of the most degrading doctrines that can be propounded to civilized men – namely, that the Legislature has power to absolve a man from spiritual vows taken before God.' Mr. Gladstone met the assertion that the Bill made no change in the law, but merely reduced to legislative form what had long had legislative effect, by a direct negative. The Bill carried divorce to the door of all men of all classes, and was therefore to all intents as completely novel as if it had no Parliamentary precedent. Entering upon

the theological arguments under protest, as a discussion which could not properly be conducted in a popular assembly, he adduced much historical testimony, particularly that of the Primitive Christian Church, to refute the propositions of the Attorney-General as to the solubility of marriage. Coming down to the Reformation, Mr. Gladstone forcibly summarized Sir Richard Bethell's argument, turning aside for a moment to interpolate an amusing personal reference:

'While I am mentioning my honourable and learned friend, it would be ungrateful in me not to take notice of the undeservedly kind language in which he thanked Heaven that I had not lived and died in the Middle Ages. My hon. and learned friend complimented me on the subtlety of my understanding, and it is a compliment of which I feel the more the force since it comes from a gentleman who possesses such a plain, straightforward, John-Bull-like character of mind —*rusticus abnormis sapiens crassaque Minerve*. Therefore, and by the force of contrast, I feel the compliment to be ten times more valuable. But I must say, if I am guilty of that subtlety of mind of which he accuses me, I think that there is no one cause in the history of my life to which it can be so properly attributed as to my having been for two or three pleasant years the colleague and co-operator with my hon. and learned friend. And if there was a class of those *subtilissimi doctores*

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.