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John Emerich Edward Dalberg, Lord Acton, *Acton-Creighton Correspondence* [1887]



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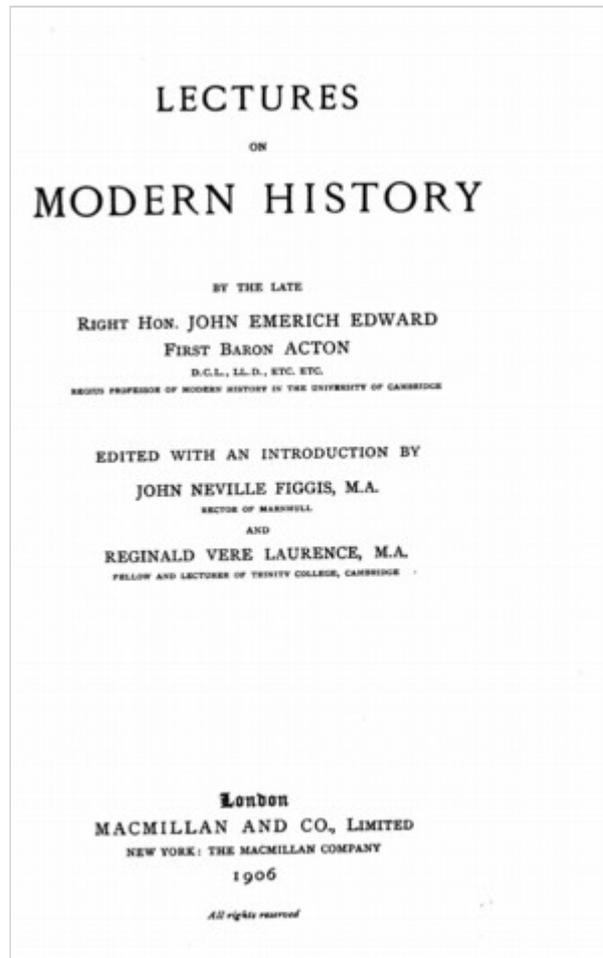
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Acton-Creighton Correspondence (1887)

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About This Title:

In one of these 3 letters to Archbishop Creighton Lord Acton makes his famous statement about “power corrupts and absolute power absolutely”. He also makes other remarks about the proper role for moral judgments in history.

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LETTER I.

Cannes, April 5, 1887

Dear Mr. Creighton,

I thank you very sincerely for your letter, which, though dated April 1, is as frank as my review was artful and reserved. The postponement gives me time to correct several errors besides those you point out, if you will let me have my manuscript out here. The other will also be the better for leisurely revision. Forgive me if I answer you with a diffuseness degenerating into garrulity.

The criticism of those who complained that I attacked the Germans without suggesting a better method seems to me undeserved. I was trying to indicate the progress and—partial—improvement of their historical writing; and when I disagreed I seldom said so, but rather tried to make out a possible case in favour of views I don't share. Nobody can be more remote than I am from the Berlin and the Tübingen schools; but I tried to mark my disagreement by the lightest touch. From the Heidelberg school I think there is nothing to learn, and I said so. Perhaps I have been ambiguous sometimes, for you say that appreciation such as yours for the essentials of the Roman system is no recommendation in my eyes. If that conclusion is drawn from my own words I am much in fault. But that has nothing of importance to do with a critique in the *H. R.* [*English Historical Review*].

And when you say that I am desirous to show how the disruption might have been avoided, I only half recognise myself. The disruption took place over one particular, well-defined point of controversy; and when they went asunder upon that, the logic of things followed. But they needed not to part company on that particular. It was a new view that Luther attacked. Theological authority in its favour there was very little. It was not approved by Hadrian VI, or by many Tridentine divines, or by many later divines, even among the Jesuits. Supposing, therefore, there had been men of influence at Rome such as certain fathers of Constance formerly, or such as Erasmus or Gropper, it might well have been that they would have preferred the opinion of Luther to the opinion of Tetzl, and would have effected straightway the desired reform of the indulgences for the Dead.

But that is what set the stone rolling, and the consequences were derived from that one special doctrine or practice. *Cessante causa cessat effectus*. Introduce, in 1517, the reforms desired six years later, by the next Pope, demanded by many later divines, adopt, a century and a half before it was written, the Exposition de la Foi, and then the particular series of events which ensued would have been cut off.

For the Reformation is not like the Renaissance or the Revolution, a spontaneous movement springing up in many places, produced by similar though not identical causes. It all derives, more or less directly, from Luther, from the consequences he gradually drew from the resistance of Rome on that one disputed point.

I must, therefore, cast the responsibility on those who refused to say, in 1517, what everybody had said two centuries before, and many said a century later. And the motive of these people was not a religious idea, one system of salvation setup against another; but an ecclesiastical one. They said, Prierias says quite distinctly, that the whole fabric of authority would crumble if a thing permitted, indirectly or implicitly sanctioned by the supreme authority responsible for souls should be given up.

(The English disruption proceeded along other lines, but nearly parallel. Nearly the same argument applies to it, and it is not just now the question.)

Of course, an adversary, a philosophical historian, a *Dogmengeschichtslehrer*, may say that, even admitting that things arose and went on as I say, yet there was so much gunpowder about that any spark would have produced much the same explosion. I cannot disprove it. I do not wish to disprove it. But I know nothing about it. We must take things as they really occurred. What occurred is that Luther raised a just objection, that the authority of tradition and the spiritual interest of man were on his side, and that the Catholic divines refused to yield to him for a reason not founded on tradition or on charity.

Therefore I lay the burden of separation on the shoulders of two sets of men—those who, during the Vice chancellorship and the pontificate of Borgia, promoted the theory of the Privileged Altars (and indirectly the theory of the Dispensing Power); and those who, from 1517 to 1520, sacrificed the tradition of the Church to the credit of the Papacy.

Whether the many reforming rills, partly springing in different regions—Wyclif, the Bohemians before Hus, Hus, the Bohemians after him, the *Fratres Communis Vitae*, the divines described by Ullmann, and more than twenty other symptoms of somewhat like kind, would have gathered into one vast torrent, even if Luther had been silenced by knife or pen, is a speculative question not to be confounded with the one here discussed. Perhaps America would have gone, without the help of Grenville or North.

My object is not to show how disruption might have been avoided, but how it was brought on. It was brought on, *secundo me*, by the higher view of the papal monarchy in spirituals that grew with the papal monarchy in temporals (and with much other monarchy). The root, I think, is there, while the Italian prince is the branch. To the growth of those ideas after the fall of the Councils I attribute what followed, and into that workshop or nursery I want to pry. If Rovere or Borgia had never sought or won territorial sovereignty, the breach must have come just the same, with the Saxons if not with the English.

I was disappointed at not learning from you what I never could find out, how that peculiar discipline established itself at Rome between the days of Kempis and of Erasmus. It would not have appeared mysterious or esoteric to your readers if I had said a little more about it. Nor is this a point of serious difference. When you come to talk of the crisis I do not doubt you will say how it came about. Probably you will not give quite the same reasons that occur to me, because you are more sure than I am that

the breach was inevitable. But I did think myself justified in saying that these two volumes do not contain an account of some of the principal things pertaining to the Papacy during the Reformation, and in indicating the sort of explanation I desiderate in Vol. V.

What is not at all a question of opportunity or degree is our difference about the Inquisition. Here again I do not admit that there is anything esoteric in my objection. The point is not whether you like the Inquisition—I mean that is a point which the H.R. may mark, but ought not to discuss—but whether you can, without reproach to historical accuracy, speak of the later mediaeval papacy as having been tolerant and enlightened. What you say on that point struck me exactly as it would strike me to read that the French Terrorists were tolerant and enlightened, and avoided the guilt of blood. Bear with me whilst I try to make my meaning quite clear.

We are not speaking of the Papacy towards the end of the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, when, for a couple of generations, and down to 1542, there was a decided lull in the persecuting spirit. Nor are we speaking of the Spanish Inquisition, which is as distinct from the Roman as the Portuguese, the Maltese, or the Venetian. I mean the Popes of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, from Innocent III down to the time of Hus. These men instituted a system of Persecution, with a special tribunal, special functionaries, special laws. They carefully elaborated, and developed, and applied it. They protected it with every sanction, spiritual and temporal. They inflicted, as far as they could, the penalties of death and damnation on everybody who resisted it. They constructed quite a new system of procedure, with unheard of cruelties, for its maintenance. They devoted to it a whole code of legislation, pursued for several generations, and not to be found in [].

But although not to be found there it is to be found in books just as common; it is perfectly familiar to every Roman Catholic student initiated in canon law and papal affairs; it has been worn threadbare in a thousand controversies; it has been constantly attacked, constantly defended, and never disputed or denied, by any Catholic authority. There are some dozens of books, some of them official, containing the particulars.

Indeed it is the most conspicuous fact in the history of the mediaeval papacy, just as the later Inquisition, with what followed, is the most conspicuous and characteristic fact in the history and record of the modern papacy. A man is hanged not because he can or cannot prove his claim to virtues, but because it can be proved that he has committed a particular crime. That one action overshadows the rest of his career. It is useless to argue that he is a good husband or a good poet. The one crime swells out of proportion to the rest. We all agree that Calvin was one of the greatest writers, many think him the best religious teacher, in the world. But that one affair of Servetus outweighs the nine folios, and settles, by itself, the reputation he deserves. So with the mediaeval Inquisition and the Popes that founded it and worked it. That is the breaking point, the article of their system by which they stand or fall.

Therefore it is better known than any other part of their government, and not only determines the judgment but fills the imagination, and rouses the passions of

mankind. I do not complain that it does not influence your judgment. Indeed I see clearly how a mild and conciliatory view of Persecution will enable you to speak pleasantly and inoffensively of almost all the performers in your list, except More and Socinius; whilst a man with a good word for More and Socinius would have to treat the other actors in the drama of the Reformation as we treat the successive figures on the inclined plane of the French Revolution, from Dumouriez to Barras. But what amazes and disables me is that you speak of the Papacy not as exercising a just severity, but as not exercising any severity. You do not say, these misbelievers deserved to fall into the hands of these torturers and Fire-the-faggots; but you ignore, you even deny, at least implicitly, the existence of the torture-chamber and the stake.

I cannot imagine a more inexplicable error, and I thought I had contrived the gentlest formula of disagreement in coupling you with Cardinal Newman.

The same thing is the case with Sixtus IV and the Spanish Inquisition. What you say has been said by Hefele and Gams and others. They, at least, were in a sort, avowed defenders of the Spanish Inquisition. Hefele speaks of Ximenes as one might speak of Andrewes or Taylor or Leighton. But in what sense is the Pope not responsible for the constitution by which he established the new tribunal? If we passed a law giving Dufferin powers of that sort, when asked for, we should surely be responsible. No doubt, the responsibility in such a case is shared by those who ask for a thing. But if the thing is criminal, if, for instance, it is a license to commit adultery, the person who authorises the act shares the guilt of the person who commits it. Now the Liberals think Persecution a crime of a worse order than adultery, and the acts done by Ximenes considerably worse than the entertainment of Roman courtesans by Alexander VI. The responsibility exists whether the thing permitted be good or bad. If the thing be criminal, then the authority permitting it bears the guilt. Whether Sixtus is infamous or not depends on our view of persecution and absolutism. Whether he is responsible or not depends simply on the ordinary evidence of history.

Here, again, what I said is not in any way mysterious or esoteric. It appeals to no hidden code. It aims at no secret moral. It supposes nothing and implies nothing but what is universally current and familiar. It is the common, even the vulgar, code I appeal to.

Upon these two points we differ widely; still more widely with regard to the principle by which you undertake to judge men. You say that people in authority are not [to] be snubbed or sneezed at from our pinnacle of conscious rectitude. I really don't know whether you exempt them because of their rank, or of their success and power, or of their date. The chronological plea may have some little value in a limited sphere of instances. It does not allow of our saying that such a man did not know right from wrong, unless we are able to say that he lived before Columbus, before Copernicus, and could not know right from wrong. It can scarcely apply to the centre of Christendom, 1500 after the birth of our Lord. That would imply that Christianity is a mere system of metaphysics, which borrowed some ethics from elsewhere. It is rather a system of ethics which borrowed its metaphysics elsewhere. Progress in ethics means a constant turning of white into black and burning what one has adored. There is little of that between St. John and the Victorian era.

But if we might discuss this point until we found that we nearly agreed, and if we do argue thoroughly about the impropriety of Carlylese denunciations, and Pharisaism in history, I cannot accept your canon that we are to judge Pope and King unlike other men, with a favourable presumption that they did no wrong. If there is any presumption it is the other way against holders of power, increasing as the power increases. Historic responsibility has to make up for the want of legal responsibility. Power tends to corrupt and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men, even when they exercise influence and not authority: still more when you superadd the tendency or the certainty of corruption by authority. There is no worse heresy than that the office sanctifies the holder of it. That is the point at which the negation of Catholicism and the negation of Liberalism meet and keep high festival, and the end learns to justify the means. You would hang a man of no position, like Ravaillac; but if what one hears is true, then Elizabeth asked the gaoler to murder Mary, and William III ordered his Scots minister to extirpate a clan. Here are the greater names coupled with the greater crimes. You would spare these criminals, for some mysterious reason. I would hang them, higher than Haman, for reasons of quite obvious justice; still more, still higher, for the sake of historical science.

The standard having been lowered in consideration of date, is to be still further lowered out of deference to station. Whilst the heroes of history become examples of morality, the historians who praise them, Froude, Macaulay, Carlyle, become teachers of morality and honest men. Quite frankly, I think there is no greater error. The inflexible integrity of the moral code is, to me, the secret of the authority, the dignity, the utility of history. If we may debase the currency for the sake of genius, or success, or rank, or reputation, we may debase it for the sake of a man's influence, of his religion, of his party, of the good cause which prospers by his credit and suffers by his disgrace. Then history ceases to be a science, an arbiter of controversy, a guide of the wanderer, the upholder of that moral standard which the powers of earth, and religion itself, tend constantly to depress. It serves where it ought to reign; and it serves the worst better than the purest.

Let me propose a crux whereby to part apologetic history from what I should like to call conscientious history: an Italian government was induced by the Pope to set a good round price on the heads of certain of its subjects, presumably Protestants, who had got away. Nobody came to claim the reward. A papal minister wrote to the government in question to say that the Holy Father was getting impatient, and hoped to hear soon of some brave deed of authentic and remunerated homicide. The writer of that letter lies in the most splendid mausoleum that exists on earth; he has been canonized by the lawful, the grateful, the congenial authority of Rome; his statue, in the attitude of blessing, looks down from the Alps upon the plain of Lombardy; his likeness is in our churches; his name is upon our altars; his works are in our schools. His editor specially commends the letter I have quoted; and Newman celebrates him as a glorious Saint.

Here is all you want, and more. He lived many a year ago; he occupied the highest stations, with success and honour; he is held in high, in enthusiastic reverence by the most intelligent Catholics, by converts, by men who, in their time, have drunk in the

convictions, haply the prejudices, of Protestant England; the Church that holds him up as a mirror of sanctity stands and falls with his good name; thousands of devout men and women would be wounded and pained if you call him an infamous assassin.

What shall we call him? *In foro conscientiae*, what do you think of the man or of his admirers? What should you think of Charlotte Corday if, instead of Marat, she had stabbed Borromeo? At what stage of Dante's pilgrimage should you expect to meet him?

And whereas you say that it is no recommendation in my eyes to have sympathy with the Roman system in its essentials, though you did not choose those terms quite seriously, one might wonder what these essentials are. Is it essential—for salvation within the communion of Rome—that we should accept what the canonization of such a saint implies, or that we should reject it? Does Newman or Manning, when he invokes St. Charles [Borromeo], act in the essential spirit of the Roman system, or in direct contradiction with it? To put it in a nutshell: could a man be saved who allowed himself to be persuaded by such a chain of argument, by such a cloud of witnesses, by such a concourse of authorities, to live up to the example of St. Charles?

Of course I know that you do sometimes censure great men severely. But the doctrine I am contesting appears in your preface, and in such places as where you can hardly think that a pope can be a poisoner. This is a far larger question of method in history than what you mean when you say that I think you are afraid to be impartial; as if you were writing with purposes of conciliation and in opposition to somebody who thinks that the old man of the Seven Mountains is worse than the old man of one. I do not mean that, because your language about the Inquisition really baffles and bewilders me. Moreover, you are far more severe on Sixtus about the Pazzi than others; more, for instance, than Capponi or Reumont. And my dogma is not the special wickedness of my own spiritual superiors, but the general wickedness of men in authority—of Luther and Zwingli and Calvin and Cranmer and Knox, of Mary Stuart and Henry VIII, of Philip II and Elizabeth, of Cromwell and Louis XIV, James and Charles and William, Bossuet and Ken. Before this, it is a mere detail that imperfect sincerity is a greater reproach in divines than in laymen, and that, in our Church, priests are generally sacrilegious; and sacrilege is a serious thing. Let me add one word to explain my objection to your use of materials. Here is Pastor, boasting that he knows much that you do not. He does not stand on a very high level, and even his religion seems to be chiefly ecclesiastical. But I do apprehend that his massive information will give him an advantage over you when he gets farther. In that light I regret whatever does not tend to increase the authority of a work written on such *Culturstufe* as yours. I did not mean to overlook what may be urged *per contra*. When you began there was no rival more jealous than Gregorovius. That is not the case now. I should have wished your fortification to be strengthened against a new danger.

I am sure you will take this long and contentious letter more as a testimony of heart confidence and respect than of hostility—although as far as I grasp your method I don't agree with it. Mine seems to me plainer and safer; but it has never been enough to make me try to write a history, from mere want of knowledge. I will put it into canons, leaving their explanation and development to you.

I remain, yours most sincerely

Acton

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LETTER II.

Advice to persons about to write History: Don't. Visit the Monte Purgatorio, as Austin called the Magnesian rock that yields Epsom Salts; or: Get rid of Hole and Corner Buffery.

In the Moral Sciences Prejudice is Dishonesty.

A Historian has to fight against temptations special to his mode of life, temptations from Country, Class, Church, College, Party, authority of talents, solicitation of friends.

The most respectable of these influences are the most dangerous.

The historian who neglects to root them out is exactly like a juror who votes according to his personal likes or dislikes.

In judging men and things, Ethics go before Dogma, Politics or Nationality.

The Ethics of History cannot be denominational.

Judge not according to the orthodox standard of a system, religious, philosophical, political, but according as things promote or fail to promote the delicacy, integrity and authority of Conscience.

Put Conscience above both System and Success.

History provides neither compensation for suffering nor penalties for wrong.

The moral code, in its main lines, is not new; it has long been known; it is not universally accepted in Europe, even now. The difference in moral insight between past and present is not very large.

But the notion and analysis of Conscience is scarcely older than 1700; and the notion and analysis of veracity is scarcely older than our time—barring Sacred Writings of East and West.

In Christendom, time and place do not excuse—if the Apostle's Code sufficed for Salvation.

Strong minds think things out, complete the circle of their thinking, and must not be interpreted by types.

Good men and great men are *ex vi termini*, aloof from the action of surroundings.

But goodness generally appeared in unison with authority, sustained by environment, and rarely manifested the force and sufficiency of the isolated will and conscience.

The Reign of Sin is more universal, the influence of unconscious error is less, than historians tell us. Good and evil lie close together. Seek no artistic unity in character.

History teaches a Psychology which is not that of private experience and domestic biography.

The principles of public morality are as definite as those of the morality of private life; but they are not identical.

A good cause proves less in a man's favour than a bad cause against him.

The final judgment depends on the worst action.

Character is tested by true sentiments more than by conduct. A man is seldom better than his word.

History is better written from letters than from histories: let a man criminate himself.

No public character has ever stood the revelation of private utterance and correspondence.

Be prepared to find that the best repute gives way under closer scrutiny.

In public life, the domain of History, vice is less than crime.

Active, transitive sins count for more than others.

The greatest crime is Homicide.

The accomplice is no better than the assassin; the theorist is worse.

Of killing from private motives or from public, from political or from religious, *eadem est ratio*. Morally, the worst is the last. The source of crime is *pars melior nostri*. What ought to save, destroys. The sinner is hardened and proof against Repentance.

Faith must be sincere. When defended by sin it is not sincere; theologically, it is not Faith. God's grace does not operate by sin.

Transpose the nominative and the accusative and see how things look then.

History deals with Life; Religion with Death. Much of its work and spirit escapes our ken.

The systems of Barrow, Baxter, Bossuet higher, spiritually, constructively, scientifically, than Penn's. In our scales his high morality outweighs them.

Crimes by constituted authorities worse than crimes by Madame Tussand's private malefactors. Murder may be done by legal means, by plausible and profitable war, by calumny, as well as by dose or dagger.

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LETTER III.

The College, Worcester [April 9, 1887]

My dear Lord Acton,

Your letter is an act of true friendliness, and I am very grateful to you for it, more grateful than I can say. It is a rare encouragement to have such a standard set up as you have put before me. Judged by it I have nothing to say except to submit: *efficaci do manus scientiae*. Before such an ideal I can only confess that I am shallow and frivolous, limited alike in my views and in my knowledge. You conceive of History as an Architectonic, for the writing of which a man needs the severest and largest training. And it is impossible not to agree with you: so it ought to be.

I can only admit that I fall far short of the equipment necessary for the task that I have undertaken. I was engaged in reading quietly for the purpose, and the beginning of writing lay in the remote distance in my mind, when I received a letter asking me to look through the papers of an old gentleman whom I slightly knew, who on his deathbed had made me his literary executor. I came across him at Oxford in the Bodleian, where he came to read for a history of the rise of Universities. He died at the age of seventy-four, possessor of a vast number of notes, out of which all that I could piece together was an article on Wyclifs Oxford life. This filled me with a horror of notebooks and urged me to begin definitely to write. I thought that I had best frankly do what I could; anything would serve as a step for my successors. So I wrote.

I entirely agree with your principles of historical judgments: but apparently I admit casuistry to a larger extent than you approve. I remember that in 1880 I met John Bright at dinner: he was very cross, apparently a cabinet meeting had disagreed with him. Amongst other things he said: "If the people knew what sort of men statesmen were, they would rise and hang the whole lot of them." Next day I met a young man who had been talking to Gladstone, who urged him to parliamentary life, saying: "Statesmanship is the noblest way to serve mankind."

I am sufficient of a Hegelian to be able to combine both judgments; but the results of my combination cannot be expressed in the terms of the logic of Aristotle. In studying history the question of the salvability of an archdeacon becomes indefinitely extended to all officials, kings and popes included. What I meant in my offending sentence in my preface was that anyone engaged in great affairs occupied a representative position, which required special consideration. Selfishness, even wrongdoing, for an idea, an institution, the maintenance of an accepted view of the basis of society, does not cease to be wrongdoing: but it is not quite the same as personal wrongdoing. It is more difficult to prove, and it does not equally shock the moral sense of others or disturb the moral sense of the doer. The acts of men in power are determined by the effective force behind them of which they are the exponents: their morality is almost always lower than the morality of the mass of men: but there is generally a point fixed below which they cannot sink with impunity. Homicide is always homicide: but there

is a difference between that of a murderer for his own gain, and that of a careless doctor called in to see a patient who would probably have died anyhow; and the carelessness of the doctor is a difficult thing to prove.

What is tolerance nowadays? Is it a moral virtue in the possessor, or is it a recognition of a necessity arising from an equilibrium of parties? It often seems to me that we speak as if it was the first, when actually it is the second. My liberalism admits to everyone the right to his own opinion and imposes on me the duty of teaching him what is best; but I am by no means sure that that is the genuine conviction of all my liberal friends. French liberalism does not convince me that it is universal. I am not quite sure how Frederick Harrison or Cotter Morrison would deal with me if they were in a majority. The possession of a clear and definite ideal of society seems to me dangerous to its possessors. The Mediaeval Church had such an ideal: the result was the Inquisition, which was generally approved by the common consciousness. In the period of the end of the fifteenth century the Papacy seemed to me to have wearied of the Inquisition which was not much supported. The Popes were comparatively tolerant to Jews, Marrani, Turks; they did not attack the humanists; they did not furbish up the old weapons and apply them to new cases—except in the recognition of the Spanish Inquisition by Sixtus IV, about whom I have probably expressed myself loosely, but I have not my volumes here and I do not exactly [recall] what I said. What I meant was that to Sixtus IV this recognition was a matter of official routine. To have refused it he would have had to enunciate a new principle and make a new departure in ecclesiastical jurisdiction. I should have honoured him if he had done so; but I do not think him exceptionally persecuting because he did not do so. He accepted what he found. My purpose was not to justify him, but to put him in rank with the rest. I think, however, that I was wrong, and that you are right: his responsibility was graver than I have admitted. I think he knew better.

You judge the whole question of persecution more rigorously than I do. Society is an organism and its laws are an expression of the conditions which it considers necessary for its own preservation. When men were hanged in England for sheep stealing it was because people thought that sheep stealing was a crime and ought to be severely put down. We still think it a crime, but we think it can be checked more effectively by less stringent punishments. Nowadays people are not agreed about what heresy is; they do not think it a menace to society; hence they do not ask for its punishment. But the men who conscientiously thought heresy a crime may be accused of an intellectual mistake, not necessarily of a moral crime. The immediate results of the Reformation were not to favour free thought, and the error of Calvin, who knew that ecclesiastical unity was abolished, was a far greater one than that of Innocent III who struggled to maintain it. I am hopelessly tempted to admit degrees of criminality, otherwise history becomes a dreary record of wickedness.

I go so far with you that it supplies me with few heroes, and records few good actions; but the actors were men like myself, sorely tempted by the possession of power, trammelled by holding a representative position (none were more trammelled than popes), and in the sixteenth century especially looking at things in a very abstract way. I suppose statesmen rarely regard questions in the concrete. I cannot follow the actions of contemporary statesmen with much moral satisfaction. In the past I find

myself regarding them with pity—who am I that I should condemn them? Surely they knew not what they did.

This is no reason for not saying what they did; but what they did was not always what they tried to do or thought that they were doing.

Moral progress has indeed been slow; it still is powerless to affect international relations. If Bright's remedy were adopted and every statesman in Europe were hanged, would that mend matters?

In return for your wisdom I have written enough to show my foolishness. Your letter will give me much food for meditation, and may in time lead to an amendment of my ways. That you should have written shows that you think me capable of doing better. I will only promise that if I can I will; but the labours of practical life multiply, and I have less time for work at my subject now than I had in the country. For a period coming on I ought to spend years in Archives: which is impossible. . . .

My jottings bear traces of the incoherence of one who has preached five sermons this week, and has two more to preach tomorrow. I have not had time to think over your letter: but I wanted to thank you. Perhaps the effort to rid myself of prejudice has left me cold and abstract in my mode of expression and thinking. If so it is an error to be amended and corrected.

Will you not someday write an article in the *Historical Review* on the Ethics of History? I have no objection to find my place among the shocking examples. Believe me that I am genuinely grateful to you.

Yours most sincerely

M. Creighton