

GORHAM, GEORGE CORNELIUS.

George C. Gorham letter, 1856

Emory University
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Descriptive Summary

Creator: Gorham, George Cornelius.
Title: George C. Gorham letter, 1856
Call Number: Manuscript Collection No. 103
Extent: 0.01 cubic ft. (2 letters)
Abstract: Contains two letters between George Gorham and the Lord Bishop of Exeter.
Language: Materials entirely in English.

Administrative Information

Restrictions on Access

Unrestricted access.

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Citation

[after identification of item(s)], George Cornelius Gorham Letters, Archives and Manuscript Dept., Pitts Theology Library, Emory University.

Processing

Processed by John N. Wright and Nancy H. Watkins, 1989, 1996

Processed from accession number 85-013

Collection Description

Biographical Note

George Cornelius Gorham was born at St. Neots, Huntingdonshire, England, on August 21, 1787. In 1805, Gorham enter Queens' College, Cambridge and completed the B.A. in 1808. In 1810, he was elected as a fellow at Queens' College. Prior to his ordination in 1811, Thomas Dampier, bishop of Ely, required a private examination of Gorham's views on baptismal

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regeneration. The examination found Gorham's views at odds with those of both the High and Low parties of the Anglican Church, but the bishop allowed him to be ordained. Gorham completed the M.A. at Queen's College in 1812 and the B.D. in 1820.

From 1814-1846 Gorham served as curate of Beckenham, Kent; Clapham, Surrey; St. Mary's Chapel, Maidenhead; and Fawley. In February 1846, Gorham was instituted in the vicarage of St. Just by Henry Phillpotts, bishop of Exeter. The following year he had a dispute with the bishop over the selection of a curate at St. Just.

On November 2, 1847, Lord-chancellor Cottenham recommended Gorham for the vicarage at Brampford Speke, near Exeter. The bishop refused to institute him until he was satisfied that Gorham was fit for the charge. In December 1847 and March 1848, Gorham underwent an intense examination into his beliefs regarding baptismal regeneration. The bishop found him to be an able and learned theologian but, due to his Calvinist views on baptism, refused to install him in the living at Brampford Speke. Gorham then began the lengthy legal process of contesting the bishop's decision by appealing to the court of arches. On August 6, 1851, the court instituted George Gorham into the living at Brampford Speke.

The fury over the Gorham Case eventually resulted in Archdeacon Henry Edward Manning (MSS. 002) and others leaving the Anglican Church in favor of the Roman Catholic Church. For the remainder of his life Gorham dedicated himself to rebuilding and decorating the church at Brampford Speke where he died on June 19, 1857.

Scope and Content Note

This small collection consists of two letters. The first, dated November 25, 1856, is written by Gorham to Henry, Lord Bishop of Exeter, requesting permission to perform an adult baptism. The second letter, dated November 27, 1856, is the bishop's response to Gorham. The letters illustrate the bishop's continued concerns about Gorham's views on baptism.

