

File 110 **March 5, 1839**
Mr. Bourne's letter to the Bishop in his own defence

My Lord

I have not much reason to doubt that Griffith is the prime instigator of this new attempt on my character and it is only another evidence of the deep rooted hatred which he has so long manifested to myself and others. Your Lordship will readily detect the hypocrisy and malignity of the various representations contained in the communication. Your Lordship will not attach much weight to them, when you are informed, that it is, to intents and purposes, a secret conspiracy, which neither the Commandant of the Volunteers, here stationed, nor myself knew anything of until it was done. You will attach less weight to it still, when you learn that all of the individuals whose names are on the list are Volunteers, privates and officers, under Griffith. You will attach less weight to them still, when you learn, that many of these persons did not sign their names to the papers others were not aware of the contents of the petition and it seems that most if not all, who signed or consented to do so, were persuaded, that I had been opposing Volunteers, endeavouring to have them broke,

had been in league with the rebels, that I had secreted ammunition in my cellar for them, had signed a petition against the Volunteers &c &c These stories were calculated to stir up the prejudices of the Volunteers and appear to have been circulated for the purpose of obtaining signatures and individuals thus imposed upon signed the paper or consented to their signatures being put down without even knowing to what they were signing their names. Your Lordship will attach less importance to them still, when you learn, that many respectable and worthy persons, Protestant and Catholic when asked (with urgent entreaties) to sign it would have nothing to do with it. Your Lordship will think less of the Petition still when you learn that the Majority of the worthy and respectable portion of the community (so far as I could learn) knew nothing about it. Your Lord

ship will think less of it when you learn that on my receiving the returned Petition, and when I called upon Major Swinburne (of the 83rd Reg't.) in command here and mentioned the circumstances to him, he became exceedingly indignant. He reprimanded the Officers whose names were on the list, very severely, and authorized me to state to your Lordship, that so far as his [..?..] residence in Rawdon, had given him an opportunity of observing, he had no hesitation in saying that he considered my discourses in perfect accordance with the Scripture.

You will think less of the representations contained in the petition, when you learn that after having read the petition itself to the Congregation, it appeared to excite an almost universal feeling of indignation, (in some instances even tears) when I called the names of the Subscribers to it and of those who were present all but a few requested to have their names erased from the list. The most of those to whom I spoke, or rather who came before or afterwards to me had been deceived - or had little or any idea of the statement made in the Petition. Many a one said he would not have done the like on any account and it should be the last time they would ever sign anything of the kind. Your Lordship will think less of the Statement still when you learn that Col. Swinburne spoke most feelingly and indignantly before the congregation and there publicly and severely reprimanded the "petitioners". He said that during the whole of the 40 years during which he had been in the Army he had never heard of anything so disgraceful, and unmilitary and that if he or any other officer in the line were guilty of such a proceeding - his Commission would not be worth a straw. And he requested me on the spot to furnish him with a copy of the whole proceeding and the names of all attached to it, and he would lay it before the Governor without delay. He authorized me to state that if it should become necessary for your Lordship to come here or to depute any individual to investigate this business while he remains here - he would lend every assistance in his power; and that in the mean time he would proceed to hold communication, with

the Governor on the Subject. He will therefore leave this place for Montreal tomorrow in full possession of the merits of the case. It is proper for me my Lord, to make some remarks in reference to the Resolutions which I send herewith. Whether your Lordship will approve if them or not, I will hardly take it on myself to surmise. But I thought I was abundantly authorized by the facts of the case, and by the assurances I had received of the love, respect and confidence of my Congregation at large to draw up some Resolutions in which they might be justly and honestly express their feelings I read them to the Congregation after the reading of the Petition. When I may say they were almost unanimously passed. *[word stroked out]* for though there were a few of those who remained obstinate in their attachment to the intention of the "petition" they did not vote at all. In testimony of the proceeding Col, Swinburne cheerfully put down his name on the paper containing the Resolutions; as also 4 members of the Vestry. I did not think until after I had found the papers and had partly commented, whether it would be proper to allow names to be erased – but as it appeared so far as we could ascertain that they were imposed – and we re afterwards sorry for what they had done, I thought it but just to allow them to undo what they had done. With these explanations my Lord I return the "petition" in the hope that is will occasion your Lordship much further trouble. I have the honour to be your Lordship's faithful serv't R.H. Bourne