

# CARTOONS from 1874 and 1883

## DEPICTING JOHN FIELDER MACKARNESS, BISHOP OF OXFORD

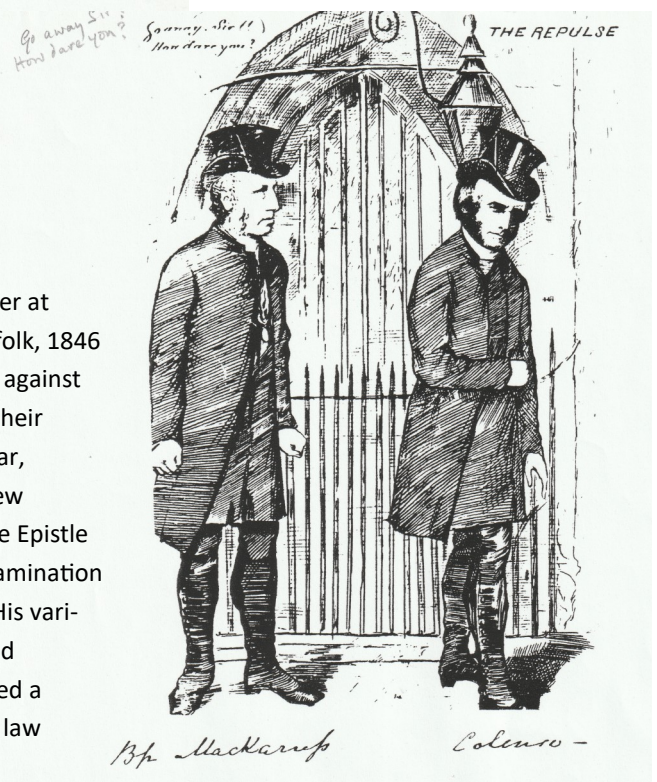
The cartoons on this page appeared in ‘Oxford Caricatures’ in 1874 and were reproduced in the Balliol Collage Annual Record in 1998. They referred to a controversy concerning Bishop Colenso of Natal, in which John Fielder Mackarness was

involved. Colenso was invited to preach in Oxford, then ‘uninvited’ by Bishop Mackarness. More details about the affair are on the next page.



### Bishop John Colenso, 1814-1883—background

Colenso was Fellow of St John’s College, Cambridge. He was a master at Harrow School from 1839-32, and Vicar of Fornsett St Mary, Norfolk, 1846-53. In 1853 he was appointed the first Bishop of Natal. He decided against an official ruling requiring polygamous African converts to divorce their wives. He mastered the Zulu language and produced a Zulu grammar, dictionary, books, and translations of part of the Old Testament, New Testament and Prayer Book. In 1861 he wrote a commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, attacking the sacramental system, and a critical examination of the Pentateuch in which he described these books as forgeries. His various writings aroused great opposition. He was formally deposed and excommunicated by Bishop Gray of Cape Town in 1863, and declared a heretic. However, he was confirmed in possession of his see by the law courts in 1866. He denounced the Zulu War in 1879.



John Prest

BALLIOL COLLEGE  
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Stella Waterman

FRONT AND BACK COVER: 'The Repulse' and 'The Welcome'. In November 1874 the deposed Bishop of Natal, John William Colenso, came to Oxford, and stayed with the Master of Balliol. It was announced that he would preach at Carfax Church on the morning of Sunday 29 November. On 27 November the Bishop of Oxford, John Fielder Mackarness, was cajoled by zealous churchmen into issuing a monition forbidding the Rector, Carteret J.H. Fletcher, to allow his pulpit to be used by a heretic. On 28 November Fletcher gave out that the monition would be obeyed. The following day, when "an unusually large congregation" including the Mayor and Corporation assembled for the morning service, Fletcher went to the pulpit himself and "read the sermon that the Bishop of Natal would have preached had he been allowed to do so". "The discourse . . . consisted chiefly of a plea for liberty of conscience." As the *Oxford Times* said (5 December, 7f), "The Rector of St. Martin's has managed, whilst complying with the letter of his diocesan monition, to thus evade the spirit of it".

In the afternoon Colenso occupied the pulpit of the college chapel "which, it is understood, is not under the jurisdiction of the Bishop of the diocese. The chapel was crowded to excess, large numbers being compelled to go away disappointed". There was nothing in the sermon "of a doctrinal character".

The affair appears to have been stage-managed and it looks as though the *Oxford Times* was fed with reports and lessons about the folly of attempting to suppress opinions from the Balliol spin-doctors. Clerical intolerance was still a factor to be reckoned with in Oxford, and deserved to be exposed. But it is difficult to find a hero in this incident, unless it was Carteret J.H. Fletcher. He had been an undergraduate at Worcester College, and curate at St. Mary's from 1867 to 1872, before being presented to the living at St. Martin's. It is not known what brought him into the Balliol camp. But he did not take the Bishop's interference lying down. He wrote a letter to the *Oxford Chronicle* (5 December 1874, 8c) which began:- "Sirs—The fact that the Bishop of Oxford interdicted Bishop Colenso from preaching in St. Martin's Church last Sunday, after he had consented to do so on my invitation, compels me to exonerate myself from the censure which the act of my Diocesan may be thought to convey".

The cartoon has been reproduced before, in Walter Sichel, *The Sands of Time: Recollections and Reflections* (1923) facing p. 112, where the church is mistakenly identified as St. Mary's.

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THE RIGHT REV. J. F. MACKARNESS, D.D.,  
THE "READING BISCUIT" BISHOP.  
(HUNTLEY AND) "PALMER QUI MERUIT FERAT." IN RETURN, MESSRS.  
H. AND P. ARE QUITE READY TO TAKE "ORDERS."

This cartoon of John Fielder Mackarness was published in 'Punch' in 1883, and rediscovered by Christopher Mackarness in 2021. Picking up all the jokes and topical references after almost 140 years is challenging—the following notes and ideas have been put together by Patience Mackarness.

### The 'Reading Biscuit' Bishop

For many years, biscuit company Huntley and Palmers was based in Reading - part of the Diocese of Oxford. The cartoon was topical, appearing just after the Reading Church Congress (2-5 October 1883) at which Bishop Mackarness presided despite having caught a chill.

The cartoon may reference an earlier visit by the Bishop to the Huntley and Palmers factory

itself. According to Charles Mackarness' book about his father, *Memorials of the Episcopate of Bishop Mackarness*, JFM led the Reading Mission in February 1878. After preaching in St Mary's Church (2nd February), St Giles' Church and the Town Hall (3rd February), he visited the factory and addressed 2,400 male workers in the loading shed, moving from 'the more crying sins of drunkenness and impurity to the general want of love and kindness'. He then spoke to 200 female workers in the women's department, 'standing upon a platform composed of a few biscuit boxes laid side by side'. During his address, he urged the women to remember that their true sphere of influence was in the home. The next day he addressed 500 men and boys at the tin factory of Messrs. Huntley, Bourne, and Stevens (which was apparently producing matchboxes rather than biscuit tins) 'entreating his hearers not to turn away from the Gospel message'. He planned to speak to female workers too, 'but a domestic bereavement obliged him to leave Reading without delay'. Presumably this was the death of his mother, Katherine Mackarness 1795-1878.

### **(Huntley and) Palmer qui meruit ferat**

This includes a play on the 'Palmer' of Huntley & Palmers, and may also reference Lord Nelson. The information below is taken from the website of the University of Southern California (USC), one of many institutions to use the same Latin motto:

*PALMAM QUI MERUIT FERAT, can be loosely translated from the Latin as "let whoever earns the palm bear it." The expression reflects the broad significance of palms, palm fronds and other branches of foliage as symbols of triumph, victory, ascension and regeneration in ancient times, and in particular may allude to the Roman custom of giving the victorious gladiator a palm branch as reward for prowess.*

*One of the earliest references to the phrase is found in a small volume of Latin verse, titled *Lusus Poetici*, which was first published by English theologian John Jortin in 1722. Decades later, it became widely known as the personal motto of Horatio Nelson, a British naval hero who distinguished himself during the Napoleonic Wars. In 1798, after a spectacular victory over Napoleon at the Battle of the Nile, Nelson was granted the title of Baron Nelson of the Nile, and the words PALMAM QUI MERUIT FERAT were added to his coat of arms.*

**A play on 'orders' - biscuits/holy orders.**

I'm not sure of the significance of the **jack-in-the-box!** However, JFM seems to have been considered an outspoken and fearless Bishop, so the *Punch* cartoonist may have been suggesting that his personality and opinions popped up everywhere in public life. His controversial involvement in the Clewer Case or Carter Case (summarised in the ['Other Material' section of The Mackarness Place](#)) would still have been remembered in 1883. Other issues with which he was associated were The Abolition of Tests Bill, the 'Bulgarian atrocities', the Afghan war (voting with the opposition against the government), the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill, the controversy over Bishop Colenso described in this document, and his defence of the Society of the Holy Cross against charges of conspiracy.