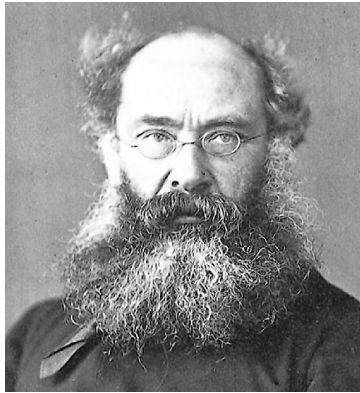


# BARCHESTER TOWERS

by Anthony Trollope



## THE AUTHOR

Anthony Trollope (1815-1882) was born in London to a failed barrister and a novelist whose writing for many years supported the family. Financial difficulties forced him to transfer from one school to another and prevented a university education. At age 19 he began work for the Post Office, for which he labored for more than thirty years. His earliest novels, written in Ireland in the late 1840s, were not especially successful, but with the publication of *The Warden* in 1855, he began the series of six Barchester novels, known as the Barchester Chronicles, focusing on the daily issues of church politics in upper middle-class England, that would prove to be the foundation of his reputation. Trollope was by personal profession a High Churchman, but sought to find good in evangelicals and reformers as he skewered their enthusiasm; he consistently attacked, not the Church, but its foibles. His writing technique was disciplined to say the least. Rising daily at 5:30 and writing at the steady rate of a thousand words per hour until time to report to the Post Office (from which he finally retired in 1867 to devote his full time to writing, after which he worked until 11:00 A.M.), he methodically produced sixty-five books, forty-seven of which were novels, writing even while he was traveling abroad to places as far-flung as Australia, Ceylon, Iceland, and even America (of which, like Dickens, he was very critical). He continued to write until the end, and died of a sudden stroke at the age of 67.

*Barchester Towers* is the second of six books in Trollope's Barchester Chronicles. It, like *The Warden*, deals largely with church politics. In this volume, the conflict between High and Low Church factions is the context within which the story takes place. Grantly, Harding, Arabin, and the other traditionalists in fact belong to neither faction; they are as appalled by the scorning of long-standing tradition among the Low Churchmen represented by Slope and the Proudies (Trollope calls them Evangelicals, but the spiritual zeal of a George Whitefield is sorely lacking among them) as they are of the Anglo-Catholic "bell, book, and candle" of Newman, Pusey, and the High Church Tractarians. In fact, the religion of Barchester is closest to what might be called Latitudinarianism - the clergyman as country squire, enjoying the good life in the "living" to which his church office entitles him. Mr. Harding may indeed be "a good man without guile," but one doubts that anyone in the cast, or by implication the author himself, has a clear idea of what true Christianity is.

## PLOT SUMMARY

This story five years after *The Warden* ended, and again the author begins by introducing the major characters. Elderly Bishop Grantly is near death, and the immediate question involves his successor. His son, the archdeacon of Barchester, badly wants the appointment, but the current government is on the verge of collapse, and what ensues is a sort of macabre race: Which will fall first, the bishop of Barchester or the British government? If the former, the archdeacon should succeed his father through the influence of his friends in power; if the latter, he has no hope. As the old man lingers, his son struggles with exceedingly mixed feelings. When he finally passes peacefully, the archdeacon immediately sends a telegram to a friend in Parliament, only to find out from Septimus Harding, who is asked to mail the telegram, that the government had fallen earlier that day and that the opposition party was in power. As a result, the new bishop is not Theophilus Grantly, but Dr. Proudie, a social-climbing Low Churchman with a large family who is completely henpecked by his domineering wife.

Harding, who had been forced from office as the warden of Hiram's Hospital through the exertions of his future son-in-law John Bold, enjoyed his fifteen minutes of fame as a hero of sorts for doing the right thing and resigning his sinecure. He then settles into a quiet life as vicar of St. Cuthbert's in Barchester. Parliament passes a new bill essentially nullifying old Hiram's will, restructuring the hospital to accommodate twelve men and twelve women, supervised by a matron, a steward, and a warden, their salaries specified by the act. Old Mr. Harding now spends quite a bit of time with his daughter Eleanor, who was recently widowed by the untimely death of John Bold and left carrying his child. The boy, also named John, becomes her pride and joy.

The new bishop intends to spend most of his time in London, where one can mix in proper society, and expects to leave most of the actual work of the diocese to his chaplain, Mr. Slope, a Low Churchman who finds Methodism somewhat congenial. He is an ingratiating figure who desires power and hopes to be the real bishop of Barchester in everything but name; Mrs. Proudie, of course, has other ideas, which include *her* exercising the authority on which Slope has fixed his attention. Both Mrs. Proudie and Slope are strict sabbatarians, and enjoy the pleasure of bending others to their will in this matter. The bishop's eldest daughter, Olivia, was at one time courted by Slope as a means of enhancing his own influence, but he made the mistake of deciding that she was not a rich enough catch for him before her father was named bishop. He too late came to regret his decision, and the two young people now cordially detest one another.

Two days after the new bishop moves into the episcopal palace in Barchester, Grantly and Harding pay a courtesy call and are a bit surprised to find that Mrs. Proudie and Slope are in the office along with the bishop. The conversation does not go well, between Grantly's resentment at not getting the appointment, the differences between High Church and Low Church views, and especially the incipient power struggle that awaits them all, and of which only Mr. Harding is blissfully ignorant. Surface politeness soon gives way to a long litany of complaints on the part of the Proudies and Slope about the condition of the palace and grounds, followed by a haranguing interrogation of the two visitors by Mrs. Proudie and Slope about Sabbath Schools and Sabbath-keeping in general, especially with regard to using modes of transportation on the Sabbath. By the time the interview is over, Grantly has smoke coming out his ears and even gentle Mr. Harding doubts if he could ever really like either Slope or Mrs. Proudie. Meanwhile, Grantly and Slope begin to plot what they both realize will be all-out war for control of the diocese - a war which each intends to win. The primary battleground chosen by the two is the difference between

High Church and Low Church practices and ceremonies. Though Grantly has never been given to the rituals of Puseyism (the Oxford or Tractarian Movement favored a return to Catholic ceremonies), he intends to adopt some of them immediately to irritate his rival and assert his authority. Slope, quickly given an opportunity to preach in the cathedral by Dr. Proudie, preaches a message on II Timothy 2:15 that he uses as a pretext for condemning all forms of High Church rites and ceremonies, meanwhile hinting that he is speaking for his bishop.

The result of Slope's sermon was that most of the clergy and people were indignant or worse, while some thought that perhaps the new ways ought to be considered after all (including clergy who depended on Slope's favor for their continued sustenance and women of all classes who unaccountably were charmed by Slope's ingratiating manner); in other words, the harmonious little cathedral town was suddenly and sharply divided against itself. The dean and other officials of the cathedral meet soon after and are almost unanimous in their agreement that Slope should never again be permitted to preach in their great sanctuary; Mr. Harding, at one extreme, argues that the man has as much right to preach as any other clergyman as long as he doesn't preach heresy, while the archdeacon at the other wants him barred from the premises or perhaps prosecuted for fomenting a riot. Harding, in the meantime, is looking forward to the likelihood that he will be reappointed to the wardenship of Hiram's Hospital according to the new act in Parliament. Everyone assures him that no other choice is possible. On the other hand, he fears losing his precentorship after hearing the fiery denunciations of Slope from the pulpit and knowing that the little man has the bishop's ear. Slope continues to ingratiate himself with the ladies of Barchester (few men who are not dependent on his goodwill can tolerate him), and even manages to win the good graces of Harding's daughter Eleanor Bold and her sister-in-law Mary; though their approval does not extend so far as trust, they come to think that he is not quite as bad as originally thought.

The author now introduces the Stanhope family. Dr. Vesey Stanhope is a prebendary of the cathedral and also controls three rectories, but has lived in Italy for the last twelve years, leaving initially on the pretext of suffering from a sore throat. He does nothing at all except collect the income from his various church offices while paying a pittance to a series of curates to do the actual work. In other words, Stanhope is a poster boy for the twin sins of pluralism and absenteeism. He has no religious convictions of note except the conviction that the church owes him a living, and he has brought his family up to share these convictions. His wife cares for nothing but fine clothes and an impeccable appearance, while his eldest daughter Charlotte runs the household and encourages the follies of her parents and siblings. Madeline, in her wild youth, married an irresponsible Italian soldier named Paulo Neroni, but he mistreated her and she separated from him after he left her with a crippled leg and a young daughter; she now lives at home, allows everyone to wait on her hand and foot, and flirts with any male creature unfortunate enough to come within range. Ethelbert (Bertie), the only son, is a dilettante who cannot seem to settle on a job (clergyman, lawyer, painter, missionary, sculptor) or a set of beliefs (Anglican, Catholic, Jewish, none); at this stage in the narrative, he has neither, but is popular with both genders and all classes, and, like his younger sister, is an incorrigible flirt. Slope then disturbs the Stanhopes' comfortable Italian lifestyle by summoning them home to Barchester on the pretext that they are needed in the diocese. In fact, both the Proudies and the archdeacon fully expect to enlist the Stanhopes on their side of the roiling controversy.

After spending two months in London, during which time Slope sets up several Sabbath schools and petitions the railroad to stop Sunday runs in the bishop's name while working hard

on building a coterie of supporters in the community, the Proudies return to Barchester and decide to host a reception for everybody who is anybody in town. The Grantly faction at first considers boycotting the party, but finally decides that such a move would only give an excuse for future criticism by the newcomers. The Stanhopes all prepare to come despite Dr. Stanhope's attempts to dissuade Signora Neroni. She arrives fashionably late, of course, and immediately draws the attention of everyone, including Dr. Proudie and Mr. Slope, who think she is some scion of Italian nobility. She flirts shamelessly with both of them, much to the irritation of Mrs. Proudie - especially when she finds out who Madeline really is. Worse yet, while some men are moving her couch, it gets caught on the lace of Mrs. Proudie's best party dress and ruins it, forcing her to flee upstairs and quickly change. Ethelbert, meanwhile, is rude to everyone, especially the Grantly faction, causing them to walk away from him in mid-sentence. In two notable exchanges, Slope begins to assert his independence from Mrs. Proudie, which he intends to pursue further as he strengthens his power in the diocese, and Dr. Proudie assures Mr. Harding that he will receive the appointment as warden of Hiram's Hospital.

Several days later Harding receives a summons from Slope to meet him at the bishop's palace. Slope's intention is to be as insulting as possible, set unreasonable conditions on the wardenship, and in general do everything he can to anger the elderly clergyman and get him to refuse the preferment so that he can then appoint one of his allies to the post. Slope therefore shows up late, treats Harding rudely, and informs him that the wardenship is his for the taking, but that many changes will be required, including the establishment of a Sabbath School for poor children that Harding will be expected to teach, a requirement that services be held twice a day for the inmates of the hospital, and the exclusion of the inmates from cathedral services since their seats will be wanted for others. Slope presents all of these changes as explicit wishes of the bishop, though he had discussed none of them with his superior. Harding is willing to accept the wardenship, but not under such conditions, and he tells Slope that he wishes to discuss the matter with his friends and with the bishop in person before giving his decision, but that he would not be willing to serve under the stipulated constraints. Slope tells him that talking with the bishop will be impossible because the great man is too busy, and then takes Harding's conditional refusal as his final word, though the old man had said no such thing. Slope then tells the bishop that Harding has refused the appointment, which surprises the bishop greatly, and the two then decide that the post should be offered to a nonentity named Quiverful who is utterly dependent on the new administration for his income.

Harding, meanwhile, goes to visit Eleanor in hopes of receiving some consolation, but he finds that Slope has been there first and explained the offering of the position in such glowing terms that Eleanor cannot understand why her father would possibly refuse it. Finding no support from his younger daughter and refusing to relate the details of his conversation with Slope to her, Harding then decides to visit his son-in-law the archdeacon. When he arrives at Plumstead Episcopi, however, Grantly is not home. When he confides in his elder daughter Susan, she shows no surprise whatsoever, and warns her father that Slope may be angling to marry Eleanor. When Grantly finally gets home, he is full of eager enthusiasm. He informs Harding that he has just secured the services of Rev. Francis Arabin as rector of St. Ewold, a parish just outside of Barchester. Arabin is a fellow at Oxford and a vocal high churchman, and has already been engaged in a prolonged debate in the newspapers with Slope over the issue of apostolic succession. Grantly is convinced that Arabin is the ideal man to take Slope down a peg or two and undermine his influence in the diocese. Once he hears of Harding's unpleasant conversation with Slope, he

assures his father-in-law that Slope has no power to redefine the job description of the warden, and encourages Harding not to give in to the bullying of the new chaplain. He expresses his conviction that the idea of new duties is unknown to the bishop and has come from the overactive plotting of Slope and Mrs. Proudie, and assures the old man that the seats in the cathedral will never be taken away from the inmates of the hospital. When Mrs. Grantly tells her husband about her suspicions of Slope's designs on Eleanor, however, his joy is somewhat subdued by the specter of such a revolting development.

Slope, meanwhile, loses no time visiting Quiverful to sound him out about the wardenship at the hospital. The rector of Puddingdale has fourteen children, and thus eagerly accepts the offer of the wardenship of the hospital and expresses his willingness to undertake whatever extra duties might be involved, but notes that he would be willing to accept the post only if Harding, whom he admires greatly, had positively refused it. Slope assures him that he indeed had done so. Near the end of the conversation, however, Quiverful casually reveals that Harding's widowed daughter Eleanor Bold had been left a fortune worth 1200 pounds a year by her late husband, so that Mr. Harding's future welfare need not be a matter of concern. As Slope meditates on this information, he begins to think about exactly what Susan Grantly had feared - a possible liaison with Mrs. Bold. He could hardly consider such a matter if he brutally cast out the girl's father, however, so he determines to rethink the matter of the wardenship while pursuing a relationship with Eleanor, with whom he has only spoken three or four times. Meanwhile, Charlotte Stanhope is encouraging the layabout Bertie to pursue the same end; after all, if he refuses to work, he must marry a rich wife, and Eleanor is the most eligible candidate in the diocese. He has never met Eleanor at all, but he decides that he will make the effort to win her, despite Madeline's objections. At this point the author considerably relieves any potential fears on the part of his readers by informing them that Eleanor will marry neither of the wretched candidates for her hand.

Mrs. Proudie has already met with Mrs. Quiverful and told her all about the appointment her husband was about to receive. Slope then goes to the bishop and convinces him that Harding should have the appointment after all, and Dr. Proudie sees this as an excellent opportunity to get the better of his wife with Slope on his side for a change. Slope, meanwhile, pays another visit to Eleanor, asks her if her father really wants the appointment at the hospital, and promises to do his best to change the bishop's mind and bring such a thing about, assuring her that the very conditions he had placed on Harding when speaking to him originally would be no means be enforced. Dr. Grantly then asks to meet with the bishop to discuss the matter of the hospital. Proudie agrees, still intending to defeat his wife. When he gets up enough nerve to talk to his wife about his change in mind, however, she tells him the matter is already settled and he backs down. He then pretends to be sick when Grantly arrives, telling Slope to convey the bad news of the Quiverful appointment in his stead. Grantly, however, refuses to meet with Slope. Dr. and Mrs. Grantly are by this time also convinced that Eleanor intends to marry Slope, though she entertains no such idea.

The Grantlys invite Mr. Harding and Eleanor to stay with them for a few days to get them both out of the path of Mr. Slope, but first Eleanor must fulfill an obligation to visit the Stanhopes. The pretext is to play chess, but the real reason is to give Bertie his first opportunity with the lovely widow. Coincidentally, Slope is also there, but is disconcerted to find Eleanor present because he is looking forward to an enjoyable evening with Madeline. The entire situation is a bit awkward, but Eleanor has no idea the extent to which she is being manipulated. When the four take a moonlight walk, Eleanor returns with the conviction that Bertie Stanhope is indeed quite

a pleasant fellow. The author then introduces Rev. Francis Arabin, a fellow at Oxford and a staunch high churchman who narrowly avoided the temptation of leaving for the Catholic Church along with his professor John Henry Newman. He, too, is beginning to think that the life of the solitary scholar and debater is not all it's cracked up to be, and that a comfortable preferment with a wife and family looks quite attractive right now.

When Eleanor and her father arrive at Plumstead, the men go to visit Arabin's new church and parsonage while Susan and Eleanor discuss developments. Susan immediately begins to attack Slope, and Eleanor feels bound to defend him, not because she favors him in any way, but because she is convinced that her sister's criticisms are unjust. By the time the conversation is over, Susan is convinced more than ever that Eleanor intends to marry Slope. When the men return, the group enjoys dinner together. Arabin pays little attention to Eleanor, but is vaguely aware of her beauty, while Eleanor is pleasantly surprised at the reasonableness of Arabin's conversation, especially since she had been led to expect a wild-eyed fanatic who would defend his own position whatever the cost. The group then goes the next day to examine the parsonage more closely, with the Grantlys naturally making all kinds of suggestions for improving it, which Arabin takes with a grain of salt, determining to make the changes that cost little for the sake of peace while avoiding the more costly alterations.

The author next introduces Wilfred Thorne and his sister Monica. Thorne is the squire of Ullathorne, the parish in which St. Ewold's is located, and thus is to play a prominent part in the story. The squire is a wealthy man who is inordinately proud of his ancestry. He lives with his sister Monica in an old Tudor mansion that Trollope describes in loving detail. He and his sister do their best to put on airs in London, but are given no mind, but they flaunt their ancestry, which Thorne traces all the way back to the pre-Saxon Britons, in conversations whenever possible. In politics he is a staunch Tory, supporting the Corn Laws and despising anyone who dared to vote for their repeal. Monica, more extreme than her brother, follows the Christian religion because she considers it simply a more advanced form of Druidic paganism.

The following Sunday, Arabin conducts his first service at St. Ewold's and is generally well-received, despite the critical eye of his parishioners for anyone other than their former vicar. At dinner, Monica Thorne spends her time giving Eleanor advice about how to raise her child, especially with regard to his medical care, while the men discuss the merits of bat guano as fertilizer. Over the next two weeks, Arabin and Eleanor spend part of each day together and find one another pleasant company, but neither one has any notion of falling in love. When they go to a party at the Stanhope residence, Eleanor is annoyed at the amount of attention Arabin pays to Madeline, while herself again enjoying Bertie's company.

Slope, meanwhile, is pursuing his intention to trump Mrs. Proudie and regain the hospital wardenship for Mr. Harding. To this end he visits Quiverful and sadly informs him that Mr. Harding has changed his mind about the hospital appointment and that the bishop feels compelled to give it to him. Quiverful is disappointed, but mollified when Slope reminds him that the bishop has other preferments in his gift, but Mrs. Quiverful is furious about losing the hospital's income for the sake of her fourteen children and determines to go right to the source, Mrs. Proudie herself. She initially fears that Slope was simply Mrs. Proudie's spokesman, and that the bishop's wife had betrayed her for some secret reason of her own, but she quickly discovers that Mrs. Proudie knows nothing about Slope's visit and still assumes that Quiverful will get the hospital appointment. The two are now allies against the bishop, Slope, and Harding. When Mrs. Proudie bursts into her husband's study, however, she finds Slope already there. The two then engage in

a titanic power struggle, with the bishop sitting helpless and silent between them. When Mrs. Proudie imperiously demands that Slope leave her alone with her husband, he refuses, realizing that all is lost if he does so. The bishop finally gets up enough courage meekly to ask his wife to allow himself and Mr. Slope to continue their conversation alone, and she angrily leaves the room. By the time she returns downstairs to Mrs. Quiverful, she has determined that her husband has not heard the last word on this matter, and assures the anxious mother that her husband will have the hospital in the end.

Slope then posts a letter from Dr. Proudie to the archbishop, agreeing to meet in order to confirm the hospital appointment, and sits down to write to Eleanor. The focus of the letter is an assurance that all is resolved and that her father will indeed receive the hospital preferment, but he closes it with a few words of endearment, including a compliment concerning her “beautiful silken tresses.” He then pays a visit to Madeline Neroni. She bewitches him as usual, and he goes so far as to profess his love for her, though he knows that marriage is impossible and would be foolish in any case. She is not in love with him, but enjoys playing the game, and accuses him of infidelity to his clerical vows and charges him with his intention to marry Eleanor. He leaves thoroughly confused, but no less smitten.

Meanwhile, Grantly and his father-in-law stop by Eleanor’s house to pick up her belongings and take them to Plumstead, and in the process are given Slope’s letter by one of the servants. They immediately assume it to be a love letter, and the archdeacon becomes indignant in the extreme. That evening, after the word has passed through the household (including to Mr. Arabin) that Eleanor will certainly marry Slope, the poor innocent woman finds that hardly anyone is willing to say a word to her at dinner. Afterwards, she is confronted by her sister about her “impropriety,” but cannot imagine how the simple act of receiving a letter could be construed in such a fashion. She then shows the letter to her father, thinking that he will be pleased about the matter of the hospital, but he sees nothing but the tender references at the end, which Eleanor finds as disgusting as he does, though she says nothing about the matter, thinking that such a conclusion would be obvious to all. Harding, however, takes her silence to be acquiescence to the missive’s tender feelings. Grantly then demands to speak to Eleanor, she shows him the letter, and he plainly tells her that she can never be received in his home as Mrs. Slope. She is so outraged that anyone would even dream of such a thing that she storms from the room without bothering to deny the charge, which she thinks beneath her dignity. She leaves Plumstead the next day, having somehow gotten it into her head that Arabin is the source of the false rumor about herself and Slope, and with misunderstandings all around because no one is willing to speak directly to the question that is causing so much offense to all.

Arabin, meanwhile, is rapidly coming to the conclusion that he is in love with Eleanor. He decides that he is too old to act on his feelings, but finds himself unable to get her out of his mind, so decides to rush back to Plumstead to try to see her before she leaves. The meeting is a disaster, uncomfortable for all, yet despite his clumsiness and lack of clarity, Eleanor gets the message; she now knows, perhaps not even consciously, that Arabin has tender feelings for her, and is not at all dismayed by this. [Trollope here adds an editorial comment to the effect that, if Arabin had spoken plainly of his love, Eleanor surely would have responded, but then what would become of the rest of his novel?]

Barchester is thrown into another source of controversy when old Dean Trefoil has a stroke from which he is unlikely to recover. Besides mourning the state of their faithful friend, the main topic of conversation now turns to his likely successor. Many fear that Slope will have the inside

track, and Slope himself entertains such hopes, and writes letters to Sir Nicholas Fitzwhiggin, a prominent member of Parliament, and Tom Towers, an influential reporter for the *Jupiter*. Mrs. Proudie, however, is now so furious with her former favorite that not only does she refuse to consider him for the new opening, but insists that he should be driven from his present post, and indeed from the city of Barchester. Dr. Proudie, having been intimidated by his wife again, voices no thoughts on the question except to agree with her. He also changes his mind again about the hospital and decides to give the post to Quiverful. Eleanor, still furious with the Plumstead crown, is increasingly (and innocently) drawn into the Stanhope circle. Charlotte is spinning her web to try to catch the rich widow for her feckless brother, and Eleanor comes to think of Charlotte as a dear friend, totally unaware of the trap that is being set for her. At the same time, Arabin visits his former teacher at Lazarus College in Oxford to seek his advice. Dr. Gwynne agrees to use whatever influence he may have regarding the deanery, and for that purpose plans to visit Barchester. All these machinations are coming together just in time for a garden party being planned by Monica Thorne, to which all the principals will be invited.

The day of the party arrives, and Monica and her steward Mr. Plomacy have spared no trouble or expense to make it a success. [Nor does Trollope act sparingly in describing it, spending on it more than eighty pages.] Her favored amusement is the quintain, a jousting game from the Middle Ages, though no one seems to share her enthusiasm for it. She and Plomacy also struggle mightily with deciding whom is to be assigned to which dining area. The guests then begin to arrive and the games begin. Eleanor arrives in the Stanhopes' carriage in the company of Mr. Slope, which is guaranteed to make the wrong impression on her friends and family. No less than three men - Slope, Bertie Stanhope, and Arabin - are planning to propose to Eleanor that day. Meanwhile, Madeline Neroni is playing her usual games with the men in attendance. She easily conquers the impressionable Squire Thorne, continues to make a fool of Slope, but finds that Arabin is a serious and honest man, and determines to help him win Eleanor should Bertie's overtures be unsuccessful. At the other venues, young Harry Greenacre tries the quintain, gets his staff tangled up in his horse's legs, and nearly breaks his neck though he emerges unscathed; thereafter the young men settle for taking swipes at the thing from a safe perch on the ground. Meanwhile, the social-climbing Lookalofts intrude upon the drawing room reserved for the quality, to the disgust of Monica Thorne and the solid-citizen Greenacres alike. While all this is going on, Dean Trefoil quietly breathes his last, and the members of the cabinet immediately begin to peruse the short list of possible successors, which does not include Mr. Slope.

The first of the suitors to make his move is Slope. He pursues Eleanor down a wooded path and, despite her deliberate coldness, professes his love. When he shows the effrontery to call her by her first name and attempt to put his arm around her waist, however, she slaps him in the face and runs away. She is then filled with remorse, and he with anger and thoughts of revenge. At this point the news of the dean's death is brought to the party, and Slope returns to Barchester while Eleanor breaks down in tears and confides her griefs to her new friend, Charlotte Stanhope. Charlotte comforts Eleanor and proposes that Bertie be enlisted to confront the odious Slope. Eleanor has doubts about the suitability of Bertie as her champion and protector, but Charlotte is desperate, since her father has given Bertie an ultimatum to the effect that he must soon obtain an income or betake himself back to Italy. As they search for Bertie, they encounter Madeline with Arabin at her side. While Charlotte confides her plan to her sister, Arabin and Eleanor make insipid conversation about the weather and the party, both barely realizing that they are in love with one another. Charlotte and Eleanor finally locate Bertie, and Charlotte conspires to leave

them alone together. Bertie has by this time decided that he has no desire to marry a woman forced upon him by his family and to stay in the boring town of Barchester for the rest of his life living on his wife's money, and determines to be open with Eleanor. He therefore tells her about Charlotte's scheming, confesses that he has no desire to marry her, but asks that she support his little fiction in telling his family that a proposal was duly made and politely refused. Eleanor, however, is so furious at having been deceived and used by Charlotte that she tells Bertie she never wishes to see any of his family again. With this state of affairs, the party concludes and Eleanor is deposited at her own door.

The next day, Dr. and Mrs. Proudie summon Mr. and Mrs. Quiverful to the palace, where the impoverished pair joyfully receive the news of the hospital appointment. Shortly after their departure, Dr. Gwynne pays a call on the bishop, is nonplused to find his wife in attendance with no intention of vacating the premises, and is told by Mrs. Proudie before he has a chance to open his mouth that the hospital preferment has been given to Quiverful. Not knowing what else to say, Gwynne turns and leaves, noting that the bishop had said not one word the whole time. Tom Towers, meanwhile, fulfills his promise to Slope and prints an article in the *Jupiter* recommending him for the now-vacant deanship. Slope is gratified, of course, but his joy is mitigated by his memory of the impact of Eleanor's hand on his face and the disgrace of Mrs. Proudie having gotten her way concerning the hospital. Eleanor is still simmering, not only with anger at Slope and the Stanhopes, but also with the imminent humiliation of having to admit to Mary Bold, her father, and even the Grantlys that they had been right all along about Slope and Charlotte and she had been dreadfully deceived. After postponing the inevitable by fussing over her little boy as long as possible, she finally tells all to Mary, who generously never allows to pass her lips that fatal words, "I told you so." She then tells her father, the meanwhile commiserating with him about the loss of the hospital (to which he himself gives no mind), but determines that she will never speak of the matter to her sister or the archdeacon. When the Stanhopes get home, Dr. Stanhope summons Bertie and tells him that he will support him no longer, and that he must leave on the following day. Bertie responds with his usual carelessness, but indeed does leave for Italy the next day. Madeline then sends a letter asking Eleanor to call on her and assuring her that she need fear no unpleasantness. Eleanor reluctantly responds, and Madeline tells her that she is deeply loved by Mr. Arabin, and begs that, should she choose to act on this knowledge and find happiness, she would deign to forgive the family for their offenses against her.

The next day, Madeline is surrounded by a larger crowd of admirers than usual, including Arabin, Slope, and, for the first time, Squire Thorne. She chooses this moment to humiliate Slope by making asking him direct questions about his expectations of receiving the deanship and his progress of his courtship of Eleanor; by the time she is finished with him, Slope is no longer certain whom he hates more, her or Eleanor. Arabin, however, leaves knowing what he must do. While all this is going on, Mr. Harding has received a letter from London offering him the position as dean. He rushes off to tell the archdeacon, and Grantly congratulates him warmly. Harding, however, is convinced that he is unequal to the task, and is determined to refuse the post, much to the frustration of his son-in-law. Monica Thorne has at the same time been plotting behind the scenes. She invites Eleanor to visit Ullathorne for an extended stay, at the same time planning to bring her and Arabin together as often as possible, hoping that within a year or so they may fall in love and marry. She is totally amazed, however, when he proposes to her the first night of her visit and Eleanor happily accepts his offer. Eleanor quickly returns home to share the good news with her father and finds him with news of his own. He, of course, is delighted with

her tidings, and she tries, as unsuccessfully as the others had done, to convince him to accept the deanship. The conversation, however, puts another thought into the generous old man's head: Why should not Arabin be the new dean?

Harding then shares the good news with Grantly, as well as his new brainstorm. The archdeacon is as pleased as one might imagine, especially with the fact that Slope has been stymied on all fronts, and proposes that he and his father-in-law go to London, picking up Dr. Gwynne on the way, to present to the powers that be the idea of Arabin's appointment. Needless to say, they are successful in their endeavors and the deanship is offered to Arabin. Slope, meanwhile, pays his last visit to the bishop's palace. He has already written to a friend in London seeking a new position, and the Proudies are waiting for him, eager to dismiss him from his post. Mrs. Proudie treats him haughtily, asserting all the authority of the bishop's office that she has won in their conflict; the bishop himself has little to do except to repeat his wife's words. Slope thus departs, and the author assures us that he soon marries a wealthy widow and becomes a famous preacher in London. Dr. Proudie never thereafter dares to challenge his wife's authority, and lives in henpecked misery to the end of his days. The Stanhopes, no longer having to fear Slope's threats, gratefully return to Italy, and Madeline troubles the men of Barchester no more. Harding is kind and thoughtful enough to introduce Quiverful to the five remaining bedesmen at Hiram's Hospital, and is finally convinced by his younger daughter to live with her instead of in his little apartment in Barchester. Arabin and Eleanor are married by Dr. Grantly, who at the ceremony is in a more expansive and almost joyful mood than anyone can remember, and Eleanor writes the promised missive of joy and forgiveness to Madeline Neroni. The Arabins soon have a child and live long and happy lives, with dear Mr. Harding enjoying their home and carrying on his humble ministry among his parishioners.

## MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Dr. Thomas Proudie - Newly-appointed bishop of Barchester, he is an insubstantial man who loves mixing in high society and is totally henpecked by his domineering wife.
- Mrs. Proudie - Wife of the bishop, she is a strict sabbatarian who likes to run everyone else's life for them, including her husband's, and is determined to be the real bishop of Barchester.
- Olivia Proudie - The bishop's eldest daughter, she manages to get around her parents' strictures. She was at one time in love with Mr. Slope, but she now cordially hates him.
- Obadiah Slope - Chaplain to the bishop, he is an ingratiating man who seeks power. At one point he hoped to gain this by courting Olivia, but decided she lacked sufficient fortune; after her father became the bishop, he renewed his attentions but found them rejected. He, like Mrs. Proudie, is a strict sabbatarian and wants to be the power behind the episcopal throne. He sets his sights on the deanship of the cathedral and on Eleanor Bold as the rich and respectable wife he needs to fulfill his ambitions.

- Septimus Harding - Precentor of Barchester Cathedral and rector of St. Cuthbert's, he is a kindly and humble man loved by everyone. When finally offered the opportunity to return as warden of Hiram's Hospital, from which office he had earlier been forced, he refuses; he also refuses the office of dean of the cathedral when that is offered to him.
- Susan Grantly - His elder daughter, married to the archdeacon of Barchester.
- Eleanor Bold - His younger daughter, the widow of reformer John Bold; she has an infant son, also named John, conceived shortly before his father's untimely death. She is also desired by both Obadiah Slope and Bertie Stanhope because of the fortune left her by her late husband, but ultimately marries Francis Arabin.
- Theophilus Grantly - The archdeacon of Barchester, he is a stern and stuffy High Churchman who desperately wants to succeed his father as bishop, but fails to gain the appointment. He then declares war on Slope and the Proudies, the symbols of everything he detests in the church.
- Mary Bold - Eleanor's sister-in-law and best friend.
- Dr. Vesey Stanhope - A sixty-year-old absentee prebendary and pastor, he has lived in Italy for the past twelve years; his only strong conviction is that the church owes him a living. He has done nothing at all to raise his children with any values or discipline.
- Mrs. Stanhope - His fifty-five-year-old wife, she is concerned mainly with her fine clothing and insists on always being perfectly dressed and groomed.
- Charlotte Stanhope - The elder daughter of Dr. Stanhope, now 35 and still unmarried, she runs the household, largely due to the neglect of her parents, and encourages the follies of the other members of the family, including scheming to get Eleanor Bold to marry her brother; she would be happy to see the Church of England crumble to dust if her father could continue to be paid for doing nothing.
- Madeline Neroni - Charlotte's younger sister, aged 29, she is wild and has no observable moral scruples, having married and then divorced an irresponsible Italian named Paulo Neroni (but not before bearing a child), irreparably damaged her knee in an accident, and returned home to turn her considerable charms on any male creature who happens to cross her path.
- Ethelbert (Bertie) Stanhope - The middle Stanhope child, he is a dilettante who has never been able to hold a job or a set of convictions. He finally refuses to propose to Eleanor, instead telling her of the machinations to which she has been subjected by Charlotte and returning to his bohemian life in Italy.
- Mr. Quiverful - Rector of Puddingdale, he has fourteen children and responds gratefully when Slope offers him the wardenship at Hiram's Hospital.

- Mrs. Quiverful - His hard-pressed wife, she takes offense when Quiverful offers to refuse the proffered office in favor of Mr. Harding, and schemes with Mrs. Proudie to secure the appointment for him.
- Francis Arabin - An aggressive forty-year-old high churchman, he has already been engaged in a long dispute with Slope about apostolic succession when Grantly invites him to be the rector of St. Ewold, just outside Barchester, hoping that he will destroy the annoying little man once and for all. The hoped-for battle never materializes, however, and Arabin winds up gaining the deanship and marrying Eleanor.
- Wilfred Thorne - Fifty-year-old squire of Ullathorne, he is very proud of his ancestry.
- Monica Thorne - Wilfred's sixty-year-old sister, she takes all of her brother's convictions to extremes.
- Dr. Trefoil - Dean of Barchester Cathedral, his stroke and ensuing demise lead to controversy about his successor.
- Dr. Gwynne - Master of Lazarus College at Oxford, he is Arabin's friend and mentor and is asked to use his influence regarding the appointment to the post of dean of the cathedral.
- Tom Towers - A reporter for the powerful newspaper *Jupiter*, he is a friend of Slope who advances his cause for the deanship.

### NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Clergymen began to be heard of who had ceased to anathematize papists on the one hand, or vilify dissenters on the other.” (ch.3, p.7)

“This lady is habitually authoritative to all, but to her poor husband she is despotic. Successful as has been his career in the eyes or the world, it would seem that in the eyes of his wife he is never right. All hope of defending himself has long passed from him; indeed he rarely even attempts self-justification, and is aware that submission produces the nearest approach to peace which his own house can ever attain.” (ch.3, p.10)

“There were four persons there, each of whom considered himself the most important person in the diocese; himself, indeed, or herself, as Mrs. Proudie was one of them; and with such a difference of opinion it was not probable that they would get on pleasantly together.” (ch.5, p.31-32)

“Dr. Proudie and his crew were of the lowest possible order of Church of England clergymen, and therefore it behoved him, Dr. Grantly, to be of the very highest. Dr. Proudie would abolish all forms and ceremonies, and therefore Dr. Grantly felt the sudden necessity of multiplying them.” (ch.6, p.41)

“He at once saw that open battle against Dr. Grantly and all Dr. Grantly’s adherents was a necessity of his position, and he deliberately planned the most expedient methods of giving offense.” (ch.6, p.43)

“The preacher’s immediate object was to preach Mr. Slope’s doctrine, and not St. Paul’s, and he contrived to give the necessary twist to the text with some skill.” (ch.6, p.46)

“There is, perhaps, no greater hardship at present inflicted on mankind in civilised and free countries, than the necessity of listening to sermons.” (ch.6, p.47)

“Doubting himself was Mr. Harding’s weakness. It is not, however, the usual fault of his order.” (ch.7, p.49)

“He felt as though the world were sinking from his feet; as though this, this was the time for him to turn with confidence to those hopes which he had preached with confidence to others.” (ch.12, p.100)

“New men are carrying out new measures, and are carting away the useless rubbish of past centuries.” (Slope, ch. 13, p.106)

“He believed in the religion which he taught, harsh, unpalatable, uncharitable as that religion was. He believed those whom he wished to get under his hoof, the Grantlys and Gwynnes of the church, to be the enemies of that religion. He believed himself to be a pillar of strength, destined to do great things; and with that subtle, selfish, ambiguous sophistry to which the minds of all men are so subject, he had taught himself to think that in doing much for the promotion of his own interests he was doing much also for the promotion of religion.” (ch.15, p.123)

“I shall have a beautifully complete view of my adversaries. I shall sit down before the hostile town, and fire away at them at a very pleasant distance. I shall just be able to lodge a shot in the hospital, should the enemy ever get possession of it; as and for the palace, I have it within full range.” (Arabin, ch.21, p.184)

“There is nothing godlike about us: we differ from each other with the acerbity common to man - we triumph over each other with human frailty - we allow differences on subjects of divine origin to produce among us antipathies and enmities which are anything but divine. This is all true. But what would you have in place of it? There is no infallible head for a church on earth. This dream of believing man has been tried, and we see in Italy and in Spain what has come of it. Grant that there are and have been no bickerings within the pale of the Pope’s Church. Such an assumption would be utterly untrue; but let us grant it, and then let us say which church has incurred the heavier scandals.” (Arabin, ch.21, p.185)

“Moreover, to give Mr. Slope due credit, he was actuated by greater motives even than these. He wanted a wife, and he wanted money, but he wanted power more than either.” (ch.24, p.217)

“Mrs. Proudie began to feel that if every affair was to be thus discussed and battled about twice and even thrice, the work of the diocese would be too much even for her.” (ch.26, p.232)

“Eleanor Bold appeared before him, no longer as a beautiful woman, but as a new profession called matrimony . . . Bertie did not dislike money, but he hated the very thought of earning it.” (ch.42, p.403)

“It is well known that the family of the Slopes never starve; they always fall on their feet like cats, and let them fall where they will, they live on the fat of the land.” (ch.51, p.494)

“He had thoroughly learnt that his proper sphere of action lay in close contiguity with Mrs. Proudie’s wardrobe. He never again aspired to disobey, or seemed even to wish for autocratic diocesan authority. If ever he thought of freedom, he did so, as men think of the millennium, as of a good time which may be coming, but which nobody expects to come in their day.” (ch.51, p.494)

“Welcome kneelings and bowings, welcome matins and complines, welcome bell, book, and candle, so that Mr. Slope’s dirty surplices and ceremonial Sabbaths be held in due execration! If it be essentially and absolutely necessary to choose between the two, we are inclined to agree with Mrs. Grantly that the bell, book, and candle are the lesser evil of the two. Let it however be understood that no such necessity is admitted in these pages.” (ch.53, p.505-506)

“The Author now leaves him in the hands of his readers; not as a hero, not as a man to be admired and talked of, not as a man who should be toasted at public dinners and spoken of with conventional absurdity as a perfect divine, but as a good man without guile, believing humbly in the religion which he has striven to teach, and guided by the precepts which he has striven to learn.” (ch.53, p.506)

## ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. Anthony Trollope’s *Barchester Towers* takes place in an Anglican Church being torn asunder by the controversy between the Anglo-Catholic High Church Movement and the Low Church Evangelicals, which the author describes with tongue firmly planted in cheek by saying, “Clergymen began to be heard of who had ceased to anathematize papists on the one hand, or vilify dissenters on the other.” From your knowledge of the history of the Anglican Church in the nineteenth century, assess the extent to which Trollope understands these two movements (he doesn’t even deign to mention the ultra-liberal Broad Church). He works hard to present them evenhandedly, but does he present them accurately? Why or why not?

2. In Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, the author clearly intends to present Septimus Harding as the closest thing to an ideal Christian among his characters. Do you agree? Why or why not? If you agree, support your conclusion, and if not, suggest another character who would be a better candidate. In either case, be sure to comment on what the author believes to be the characteristics of a true Christian.
3. In chapter 21 of Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, Mr. Arabin addresses the scandal of denominationalism in the following words: "There is nothing godlike about us: we differ from each other with the acerbity common to man - we triumph over each other with human frailty - we allow differences on subjects of divine origin to produce among us antipathies and enmities which are anything but divine. This is all true. But what would you have in place of it? There is no infallible head for a church on earth. This dream of believing man has been tried, and we see in Italy and in Spain what has come if it. Grant that there are and have been no bickerings within the pale of the Pope's Church. Such an assumption would be utterly untrue; but let us grant it, and then let us say which church has incurred the heavier scandals." Evaluate Arabin's argument. Is denominationalism a curse or a blessing, a scandal or a necessity in a sinful world? Support your conclusion from the novel, from Scripture, and from your knowledge of church history.
4. A contemporary critic had this to say about Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*: "Inferior to *The Warden*, *Barchester Towers* has no plot. . . . The grand defect of the work, I think, as a work of art, is the low-mindedness and vulgarity of the chief actors. There is hardly a 'lady' or 'gentleman' among them." Evaluate this criticism. Do you find the leading characters unlikeable? Are your reasons the same as those of the critic? Do these characterizations detract from your enjoyment of the book? Why or why not?
5. Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers* is full of humorous characters and situations. Which of the characters in the book did you find most humorous? Why? Cite specific incidents and quotations to support your assessment.
6. At one point in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, Obadiah Slope is described in the following words: "He wanted a wife, and he wanted money, but he wanted power more than either." Discuss the role of power and the lust for power in the book. Does the author view the subject from a biblical perspective? Support your conclusion with quotations from the novel and from Scripture.
7. Lord Acton said, "All power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." How is the truth of this statement illustrated in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*? Consider three characters from the novel and discuss the ways in which they are corrupted by the power that rests in their hands.
8. In Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, Eleanor Bold is pictured as having two close female friends, Mary Bold and Charlotte Stanhope. Compare and contrast the two, and in the process, comment on the author's view of genuine friendship.

9. The theme of ambition is at the core of the tragedy in William Shakespeare's *Macbeth* and the comedy in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*. Both stories, however, have serious things to say about the subject. Compare and contrast their portrayals of the dangers of "o'erweening ambition," using specific incidents and quotations from both works.
10. Anthony Trollope believed that one of the chief tasks of the writer of fiction is to picture people as they really are: "Truth of description, truth of character, truth as to men and women." Do *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers* accomplish this purpose? What do these novels tell you about the author's view of human nature? Be sure to use details and quotations from the novels and support your assessment from Scripture.
11. Henry James, in praising Anthony Trollope, said, "If he was to any degree a man of genius, and I hold that he was, it was in virtue of his happy and instinctive perception of human variety; his knowledge of the stuff we are made of." Do you agree? Consider *The Warden* and *Barchester Towers*. What do these novels tell you about the author's view of human nature? Be sure to use details and quotations from the novels and support your assessment from Scripture.
12. Discuss the role of romantic love in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*. Like the heroines in the novels of Dickens, Eleanor Bold seems to attract every eligible male in the cast of characters. To what extent does Trollope value romantic love, and to what extent must marriage be made subservient to the practical exigencies of life? Is his view of romantic love biblical? Why or why not?
13. Compare and contrast the views of love found in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers* and Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* (you may choose *Sense and Sensibility* if you prefer). In your essay consider the authors' views on the motivations of men and women, the characteristics essential for love to blossom, and the requirements for a good marriage.
14. Compare and contrast the views of love found in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers* and Charles Dickens' *David Copperfield* (you may choose *Our Mutual Friend* or *Bleak House* if you prefer). In your essay consider the authors' views on the motivations of men and women, the characteristics essential for love to blossom, and the requirements for a good marriage.
15. In Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*, the author occasionally injects editorial comments, at one point assuring the reader that Eleanor Bold will marry neither of her unsuitable suitors, Obadiah Slope nor Bertie Stanhope, and elsewhere opining concerning the tediousness of sermons. Evaluate these editorial asides. Do you find them entertaining or distracting? Why? Choose three of these interjections and discuss their impact on the reader.

16. Like Charles Dickens, Anthony Trollope enjoyed giving humorous names to his characters that fit the roles in the stories they were intended to fill. Choose three such figures in *Barchester Towers* and explain how the names fit the characters. In your opinion, does this practice contribute to or detract from the effectiveness of the novel? Support your opinion with specifics involving the characters you choose as well as discussing the overall impact of the practice on the reader.
17. Evaluate the treatment of women in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*. To what extent does the author demonstrate the ability to understand the struggles and desires of the fairer sex? Are his female characters realistic or stereotypical? Choose three women from the novel and use them to support your assessment.
18. The ability to create realistic characters in a work of fiction involves perception of the strengths and weaknesses of human nature, an understanding of the complexity of human personality, and the ways in which people's experiences change them. Consider the last of these three as contained in Anthony Trollope's *Barchester Towers*. Choose three characters and discuss the extent to which they change as the story progresses (or choose a significant character who does not change). How do these matters contribute to the believability of the character in particular and the novel as a whole?
19. Rev. Richard Chartres, the president of the Trollope Society, when comparing Fyodor Dostoevsky and Anthony Trollope, said, "The themes and the experience of Christlike sacrifice and blood voluntarily given which are given flesh and blood in Dostoevsky's characters open the door to transformations and moral beauty which do not lie within the compass of the world which Trollope inhabits." Use Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment* and Trollope's *Barchester Towers* to assess this criticism, being sure to include specifics from both novels.