Auburn, April 25th, 1843.

Dear Bishop,

Your esteemed letter of the 21st instant has been received. As I always turn upon an article in a newspaper which relates to you, I have turned this one of the controversy into which you have been drawn in regard to the temperance of your Church. Although I do not hesitate at all to consider the local questions involved, I have sometimes been apprehensive that you might not understand perfectly the spirit of my position in that subject.

That jurisprudence is based on the English system. It is a principle prevailing to Drake's Charter, the English Government became apprehensive that the clergy might get into their own hands, as the history says, "all the lands in the kingdom." Hence the passage of the Statutes of Mortmain. Although these statutes are not in force and have never been officially done, yet their spirit remains in the laws concerning corporations. Neither the Government nor the people of the State can judge of Corporations at an early period, or is informed from the extraordinary fact that the entire system of religious instruction and worship was devolved upon corporations. Then can be no church or congregation recognized by the laws unless it is organized in regard to its temperance by a corporation.
conveys to the congregation or to any person for their use, by operation of law
in the trustees, and any grant which should not be such operation would
the trustees would hold at least so far as all benefits of the grant
to the church should be concerned. I do not see how your plan could be
considered under existing statutes. I am well enough to that this system
may be incompatible for some churches, and I am sure that this could
be one future danger in allowing every religious society or church to take
all the land it could get and vest the title and control in charge, no
as well as in the county. This has gone by when the last was in
danger of opposition by the clergy, at least so far as the country is concerned.
But this would be worse against prejudicing which for ought I know has
their foundation in principle. And you can judge whether you would be
likely to gain the consent of the Legislature to such a modification of the
system as you desire. Although Protestants manage their temporal
and even their spiritualities very much as they think best, they are
completely satisfied with that, but insist on conformity on the part of
the Catholic Church. You can judge whether it is expedient to enter into
conflict with this prejudging. They are formidable, but you can ability
restrain the whole community and only even your opponents must
respect. Questions shall arise which upon your defeat legal advice, such as I
can give will he given cheerfully and with perfect confidence in the rightness of
and thank you of your painstaking care with a desire to aid your efforts to promote the welfare of the Church over which you preside, and which is so deeply indebted to your care.

Very respectfully and sincerely,
Your friend and devoted servant,

William H. Seward

The Right Reverend
Bishop Hughes.