

THE BISHOP OF GRAHAMSTOWN AND THE COLONIAL CHURCH.

It has been truly stated of the reports published by the Lambeth Conference, that they contain a complete scheme for the organisation of the Colonial Church, without the interference of parliament. It was, indeed, for this purpose especially that many of us came from the ends of the earth, at the express desire of our clergy and laity, that by common counsels and united action we might either form or strengthen those bonds of Church fellowship and order which hitherto we have possessed either imperfectly or not at all. These we could not expect—even if we desired—that the State would establish, and determine their conditions and limits, since in our colonies it emphatically disclaims all relations with our Church except such as it holds towards other religious bodies, and bids us, through the highest judicial tribunal in the realm, to consider ourselves “in no better, but in no worse position” than members of the Church of Rome or of the Wesleyan community.

The organisation, however, which these reports propose for the Colonial Church is no novelty. Synods have now for some time been in operation in many colonial dioceses, and in some provinces. The ecclesiastical tribunals which are recommended are already in existence in many colonies. Several bishops in Canada and New Zealand have been elected by their dioceses. Declarations of submission to synods are used very generally, wherever the authority of these assemblies depends on a consensual compact. All that the reports attempt is to consolidate and harmonise that which hitherto has been partial or disconnected.

The scheme of government which has been thus sketched out has been assailed, on one side, as giving a position and office to the laity which does not belong to them according to the order of the Church; on the other, it is represented as a bold attempt to establish a vast system of ecclesiastical