

DECLARATION OF THE BISHOPS OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES.

WHEN, some fifteen years ago, the Bishops of Quebec, Toronto, Newfoundland, Fredericton and Montreal met in conference at Quebec, they published a declaration of their views upon certain questions, in which, as they conceived, the interests of the Colonial Church were involved. As some of these points are likely, at no distant day, to be re-examined, we make a few extracts from the minutes which they published on that occasion, and would invite to them the careful attention of our readers.—*Ch. Witness.*

II. CONVOCATION.

In consequence of the anomalous state of the Church of England in these colonies^s with reference to its general government, and the doubts entertained as to the validity of any code of ecclesiastical law, the bishops of these dioceses experience great difficulty in acting in accordance with their episcopal commission and prerogatives, and their decisions are liable to misconstruction, as if emanating from their individual will, and not from the general body of the Church; we, therefore, consider it desirable, in the first place, that the bishops, clergy and laity of the Church of England in each diocese should meet together in synod, at such times and in such manner as may be agreed. Secondly, that the laity in such synod should meet by representation, and that their representatives be communicants. Thirdly, it is our opinion that, as questions will arise from time to time which will affect the welfare of the Church in these colonies, it is desirable that the bishops, clergy and laity should meet in council under a provincial metropolitan, with power to frame such rules and regulations for the better conduct of our ecclesiastical affairs as by the said council may be deemed expedient. Fourthly, that the said council should be divided into two houses, the one consisting of the bishops of these several dioceses under their metropolitan, and the other of the presbyters and lay members of the Church assembled (as before mentioned) by representation.

Upon these grounds, it appears to us necessary that a metropolitan should be appointed for the North American dioceses.

III. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP.

Doubts being entertained who are to be regarded as members of the Church of England in these colonies, and as such, what are their special duties and rights, we are of opinion that Church-membership requires (1) admission into the Christian Covenant by Holy Baptism, as our Lord commanded, "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost;" (2) that all Church members are bound, according to their knowledge and opportunities, to consent and conform to the rules and ordinances of the Church, and (3) according to their ability, and as God hath blessed them, to contribute to the support of the Church, and especially to those who minister to them in holy things. Upon the fulfilment of these duties, they may, as Church members, claim at our hands and at the hands of our clergy generally, all customary services and ministrations.

We cheerfully recognize the duty and privilege of preaching the Gospel to the poor, and of allowing to those who can make us no worldly recompense the same claim upon our services, in public and private, which we grant to the more wealthy members of our flocks.

We are further of opinion that Church members in full communion are those only who receive with their brethren the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, at the