

Enclosure in No. 13.

COLOMBO.

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SIR,

Columbo, Ceylon, 7th March, 1866.

THE Secretary of the "Church Missionary Society" has forwarded to me a copy of the letter from that body to yourself on the subject of the Synod lately held in my Diocese. As there appears from this document to be some misapprehension of the object of the "Declaration" (of which I perceive no copy is given in the above letter,) I venture to address a few words in explanation, in the hope that such misapprehension may be removed before you reply to the application of the Synod with reference to the signature of Clergy to the Declaration.

First.—I must lay great stress on the fact that nothing was further from the intention of the Synod than to impose a *new* Declaration on Clergy now, or hereafter to be employed in the Diocese, i. e. new in the sense of one more stringent, or binding to any new obligation. They desired only that the Clergy should enter into their contract with the Church in Ceylon as well as (or instead of) doing it in England.

All that the letter of the Society expresses as to their wish to maintain closely and simply the constitution of the United Church of England and Ireland, the Synod of the Diocese would echo to the letter. Nothing is further from their intention than to separate even in outward form from that Church of which they thankfully consider themselves a part. But they are told that as a Church they have not legally such identity, and this was one great reason why they met in Synod, to claim that identity for themselves. The decision of English Judges is quoted to prove that no "United Church of England and Ireland" can exist in the Colonies. Accordingly they made a Declaration of the very closest conformity compatible with their existence, as a Diocese in another Province to the principles and formularies of the Church of England. If they err, they do so by following the advice, and striving to carry out the recorded judgments of the English Courts. But I cannot conceal from myself that these decisions are the cause of this widespread apprehension of Churchmen in the Colonies, equally when as now some make honest endeavours to right themselves, and when others object to those endeavours, and find in them the very dangers which they are intended to avert. For myself, I sympathize almost with every expression that occurs on this point in the letter now before me. I wish, and I believe all the members of the Synod with me wish, to retain identity with our Mother Church. We acknowledge, readily and heartily, that degree of connexion with the State which, though not established, we still profess in the lawful supremacy of the Sovereign. We look upon ourselves as representing the National Church in these distant settlements, and, with all due respect for the expressions of lawyers in their pleadings and judgments, we will not take the position of a Sectarian body, but claim brotherhood with the Church of the Nation to which it is our happiness to belong.

One word, Sir, as to the late decisions of the Privy Council. It is not fair, I humbly submit, that the Crown should one day sanction our existence in most solemn wise, and the next disavow it and cast us off. When, in addition to my consecration as a Bishop, I accepted the offer of Her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, to take charge of a Diocese in the appointment of the Crown, I accepted a certain status and position in which I saw the assurance of sufficient power to carry out the duties of the office I had assumed. It is not justice in effect, (I am far from imputing wilful wrong) that I should find that assurance withdrawn in an entire change of the position without any warning given. I submit, then, that you must look on the Colonial Diocese as portions of the National Church, deprived not by fair legislation, but by arbitrary legal judgments of what the Crown had bestowed upon them viz.,—an acknowledgment, short of actual establishment, as complete as that of the Mother Church, a position, which though other bodies disclaim it, is valued by Churchmen, not on the false Erastian principle which would subject Christian faith and doctrine to the Civil power, but the happy conviction, that our Nation, as such, is Christian—values that which we value, and holds that which we hold—the Catholic Faith, the Communion of Saints, the fellowship of the Universal Church.

All that I am now saying derives some additional force from the position of this Diocese. Whilst, on the one hand, as a Crown colony, we are not touched by the late decision in the case of "Bishop of Natal versus Bishop of Cape Town," on the other hand, we are not, like Calcutta, directly under the action of Parliament. There is at present no pressing difficulty, the more reason that we should use the present juncture to prepare ourselves to meet any emergency of legal complications that may arise. And, with the example of the South African Dioceses before us, it cannot be said that we are too easily alarmed. Indeed, instances have already occurred in this Diocese (though not during my own episcopate), where it would have been, to say the least, of great service to have had some definite rule of action laid down in which the Bishop and his Clergy, and (I may add) the laity, had agreed. I am most happy to state that in my own person I have received support in the exercise of my office, not only from Her Majesty's Government, but from the two great Missionary bodies of the Church of England, which exercise a most beneficial influence in the colony.

But in the very letter on which I am making comment, it will be found that one of these venerable bodies has a very inadequate sense on some points of the critical position of Church interests in the Colonies. I will instance their suggestion that an entire colonial Diocese might be governed under a trust deed, or placed under colonial legislation; the effect of the one course being simply to tie it hand and foot, and, depriving it of all independent action, to rob it of that liberty which is the scriptural heritage of every Christian community; the other to expose it to the risk of interference from without with its vital and essential principles, and to give a colonial legislative body a power which is only exercised to a limited extent by the Imperial Parliament itself. I may likewise point out their acceptance as sufficient of a definition of the oath of canonical obedience, which would render the Bishop a mere machine. But I will beg you, Sir, not to suppose that we wish to claim