Recd 30 Aug

Sydney 30th April 1852

Sydney Conference as to forming Synod

My dear Mr Watson

I have one if not two most kind letters from yourself yet unreplied to, and one from your most intelligent Secretary on the same predicament. To her I would request you to offer my apologies and excuses for my present omission to write to her: while to you I must make the confession that I am not purposing to answer your letters, but to tell you news of myself. You will receive I trust two Nos of the Sydney Herald (and I desired that the same two should be forwarded to Mrs Hartley) containing a pretty faithful though much abridged report of proceedings here on the 14th and 15th inst. when the clergy together on those days to deliberate on two questions: 1. Whether they were favorable to the a Convocation composed of a clerical Synod, and lay Convention as had been proposed in the Minutes of the Bishops' Conference in 1850. and 2. Whether they agreed that a

a Petition to the Queen, praying that clergy and laity might assemble to "debate and consult, and prepare regulations for the better ordering of the affairs of the C. of Eng.d and Irel.d" having first obtained Her Royal Broad Seal so to do". Our discussion upon the whole was not unsatisfactory: in some respects quite the reverse. I was, by God's grace, firm yet conciliatory, so was able to control a spirit of turbulence which was formidably working. I felt I had what may be called three parties against me. The first composed of good but impracticable men who resolutely resist the introduction of any lay element into the management of Church affairs, even upon the very moderate requisition which I make: that as the Crown has evidently forsaken us here, we must try to provide some other representation of the laity to Parliament: 2dly the diametrically opposite party, who, on the first suggestion of admitting the laity to a due and becoming exercise of authority in all determinations on Church matters, are forgetting the agitation for giving a virtual Supremacy to the laity and

and for Ministerial all distinction between Rome and the clergy, even in the treatment of things spiritual and sacred. The third is a wrong-headed, and (not to use the term offensively) an Irish party who really blunder most obstinately in every thing, and seem to have no principle but that of representing every proposal in that point of view which is most likely to awaken calumny (to which there is more than a sufficient proneness) and to create confusion and discord among those, as you may suppose, my steerage was also difficult, and my pinnace sometimes tossed roughly about. But when the crisis came, these parties were found to consist of such heterogeneous materials that they could not unite. So when it came to a decision, they renounced each other's fellowship: and came over, in separate bodies, to vote for the Petition: which was carried by a great majority, as the newspapers will inform you. Now however, in their several departments, I have no doubt each of these will do mischief, by exhibiting the spectacle of a house

divided

divided against itself, and by sowing jealousies
and so indisposing the laity to sign the Petition. Nay it is not
more strange than true that several of those who voted
for the Petition, did not themselves sign it. The only
points on which I declared myself inflexible were two
viz: that I would maintain the distinction of names
between Synod and Convention, in order to assert most
unequivocally that clergy and laity were not one order
and that upon appropriate questions (of which they them-
selves should be judges) the clergy should have it in
their discretion to deliberate as a separate body: and
secondly that I never would assent to the American
idea that the Bishop instead of being a separate
order in the Church, and entitled to propose suggestions
as to doctrine and discipline, as well as to control
the decisions of others upon those points, should be
a mere Chairman; with only a casting vote in case of
an equal division: so that, as I said, a presbyter whom
he might have admitted yesterday to the order which

entitles

entitles him to vote at all, would to day possess
an equal voice with the Bishop himself: and two such
would outweigh and defeat the Bishop. I hope to obtain
upon these points encountenance and support from
the good churchmen of England: for I am persuaded they
are cardinal points. I was never favourable to the
suggestion of unprotestantizing the Church: (though in
a sense which they themselves understood, I have no
doubt many have) but not very judicious men
may have employed the term but neither am I any
now proposed to independentize and presbyteri-
anize the Church; (to which there is a great leaning) by
absorbing the clergy in the laity, and making a bishop,
as I have said, a mere chairman. But we "have not
so learned Christ." I have found Mr Sikes's Book
and Dr Wm (Christian Institutes (for both of which I am
indebted to you) very useful. The result of this, how-
ever is, that I have made up my mind to pay another
visit to England. I will not trouble you now with an
account of the motives which have led me to this resolu-

You I am sure will perceive a sufficient number of objects which personal conference with persons in high station may tend to advance; the fruit of which may and will be felt here through succeeding centuries. Personal objects I have none, unless it be, God willing, to see yourself once more and a few other surviving friends; especially a venerable mother more than 40 years a widow, who completed her 90th year last month. In 1834 I embarked on the same voyage with those who cannot accompany me now. I must go alone. Still, as my bodily strength and powers do not seem more unequal than they ever were to the labour, I do not think I could be justified in declining it. Many advantages may arise from this excursion: and I do not know how it could be in my power, better to wear out my remaining years. Recently there came out from England an heroic lady with no other view or object than to attend and protect to her home a sister unhappily married, and reduced to the lowest state of bodily debility. I happened to see a good deal of the case, and could not help saying if one will subject herself to this hardship for a sister's sake, ought I to shrink from it in the service of the Church. I wrote to the Revd Ernest Hawkins & later to him my design of proceeding by South America across the Isthmus of Darien from Panama which is now a very practicable route explaining the motives which led me to fix upon this course; and requested him to forward to you my letter after he had read it. The ship in which I proposed to sail was one for which George Peabody is agent. But yesterday the Captain sent word he must sail this morning: and as one days notice is rather too short to make preparation for a voyage of 6000 miles I was compelled to decline the invitation. My purpose now is to proceed to Madras or Ceylon to meet the monthly packets, and to follow the track by the Red Sea, Egypt and the Mediterranean to Marseilles and London. Or hopefully all these, I have still open to me the voyage round Cape Horn. The scarcity of seamen here, owing to the attractiveness of the Gold digging, is such that it is hardly possible from day to day to decide what course is practicable

or

Sheet 2. Via Panama 30 Oct 1852

practicable or best. I will venture now, my dear Mrs
Watson to mention to you one subject on which, for the sake
and interest of my children, I feel a deep and solemn
interest: that is the securing of my Life Insurances in
the Rock and London Assurance, against the risks of
such a voyage as I am preparing for. Lawley has very
kindly written to his friends Antony Gibbs & Sons: and
I have mentioned the matter to the Rev. E. H. and to my
own brother in Law Mr. Inglis of Argyll Court. But
there are so many risks attending life and all commu-
nications from so vast a distance, that I trust you will
pardon the great liberty I take in asking you if you
could direct enquiry to be made whether such com-
munications have been received, and such arrange-
ments as are requisite concluded. I would not for
the world impose upon you any inconvenient trouble:
but I am sure you will comprehend the very natural
anxiety which I feel to guard against any casualty
interrupting the moderate provision which I have tried
to secure for those who have the nearest claim upon me.
Trusting that God in his goodness may permit us once more
meet upon earth I am believed me Yours truly and affectionately W. G. Lyttelton