

Broughton to Coleridge, 19/3/1852

I was absent during four entire months travelling: and although it be nearly two since my return, the vast accumulation of business while I was away, and the multiplicity of new urgent matters demanding attention day by day, have prevented my writing to you any earlier. By the 'Agricola' I have forwarded to you 2 printed Papers of importance - the one a Circular recently addressed by me to my Clergy, the other containing a "Declaration" which I propose we should all subscribe, with a Petition to the Queen, praying that measures may be taken to legitimate the Synodical union and agency of the Bishop, clergy, and laity in this Diocese, in execution of the design and proposal set forth by the Bishops in their Minutes of the Conference of 1850. It is treading on dangerous ground and I have no-one to help me much. The Plan therefore in its conception and details must be taken as mine; and I submit to bear the responsibility. But I have used my best endeavours to proceed cautiously and yet effectively: and when 14th April arrives I hope God's blessing may be upon our endeavours. But I have still more to communicate. So many representations have been addressed to me from various and independent sources, as to the propriety of my being on the spot to take the oversight and direction, in some degree, of the measures to be adopted in England, that I am shaken and perplexed in my judgment as to the obligation I am under to attend to such a call. I have at last arrived at, and have declared, this to be my resolution. I will not go to England by my own free choice; because although I am not insensible to several advantages which might attend it, yet there is on the other hand much risk in quitting my Diocese for 15 or 18 months. But if there be a general impression that I ought to go, and this be expressed to me by a large body of clergy and laity uniting in the opinion, I should hardly feel myself at liberty to withhold compliance with the general voice of the Church whose servant I am. My judgment causes me to hesitate upon this one ground principally: that Mr Gladstone having given notice of his intention to bring in a Bill for conferring on the Australasian Churches the privileges we have

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asked for, and the Session of Parlt having most likely already commenced, it is possible that were I to commence the voyage within a fortnight from this time, I might on my arrival in England find everything settled. On the other hand I observe so many simultaneous movements for the attainment of Convocation or Synod, or some corresponding ecclesiastical judicatory, not in England only, but in almost all the Colonies, that I imagine when the question once comes to be opened, it will not be found possible to conclude it within one Session of Parliament: and if so, I might still be in time.

My anxiety is a good deal awakened by the following consideration: The Archbishop in his reply to our communication forwarding our "Minutes" to him, entirely passes over the proposition for the assembling of Synods and the admission of the laity. My belief is that His Grace owes us no thanks for having raised that question, but would far rather it should be allowed to sleep. He will however find that this cannot be. Applications have been or will be made from all our Dioceses, and His Grace tells me that any such proposals as we may make will be submitted to the Secretary for the Colonies, and the Ecclesiastical Law Officers of the Crown. My reply to this has been that the reference of such a question exclusively to laymen will not be satisfactory to us who think "that churchmen should do the work that is proper on to them". Honestly to speak my fears, I apprehend that if our cause be left to be managed between the Archbishop and Earl Grey, the one will be bent on giving such an evangelical aspect to the enactment, and the other so liberal a one, that by their combination something may be forced upon Mr Gladstone contrary to his views and our wishes.

But I have a still larger and more extended view. All these manifestations, from so many opposite quarters at the same instant, of anxiety for a more free development of the proper powers of the Church, and the apparent uniformity of



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purpose reigning every where without previous concert or combination, to appear to me like the leadings of Providence towards a great consummation: upon the accomplishment of which it is possible may depend the establishment of a more effectual system of unity in the C of E throughout the world. She may feel herself to be one: and her true scriptural unity may then through God's blessing be held up as an impenetrable buckler against the spurious unity of the Papal system. My conception is that it will be a false suicidal policy to individuate (sic) our efforts; directing one to the revival of Convocation in England, another to the settlement of the Australasian Polity, another to the Indian, another to the N. (sic) American, and so on. No. Let there be one concordant effort made which shall include all; which shall encompass the world:

IN (?) → and tie together on one fellowship the entire Reformed episcopal Church. The engine whereby to effect this would be the establishment of one uniform system of Synodical action throughout the whole; uniform as to principle, I mean, though necessarily modified and diversified in detail according to the variety of circs under which the separate members may exist. But this would be nothing more than that the mystical body would imitate the peculiarities of the body natural; in which while the feet wear shoes, the hands wear gloves. What I mean is that there might be diversities in the proportions of the laity admitted in this place or that, in the mode of election or rules of debating and voting; the various Churches having license to consult for themselves (in the spirit of 34 Art.). Yet there should be no breach of the Sacramentum unitatis: the right form of which I believe to be the ordering and governing of each separate Diocese by its own bishop, and all these Dioceses holding the unity of the faith; and so connected each with each, in subordination to their one only jure divino Head; which is Christ. Thus we should find I trust the truth of the maxim Vis unita fortior: and our phalanx might successfully resist the Roman legion. The time evidently requires a suggestion rather out of the common track: and this is such an one. Independently of the introduction of a principle of combination,

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which would make us a better match for Rome than we can be in our present disorganized state, we should be able to set before the world for its adoption a better scheme for an "Alliance" than those protestant or evangelical associations which Lord Shaftesbury and his compeers seem at this time to be so busy in concocting. A sufficient basis for substantial union would, I think, be offered by what is here proposed; namely the confederation of episcopal Churches, all agreeing in uniformity of doctrine, using the same liturgy and the same translation of Scripture, and to be regulated, each under their proper bishop, by Synods and Conventions (Provincial and Diocesan) all framed according to the same model. Pray think well of this, and consult those whose judgment you can depend upon to confirm my views if right, and to detect their fallacy if they involve any. If it were not rather hackneyed I would say Si quid movisti etc etc and you in reply might perhaps return me a useful hint in Sumite materiam vestris etc. Were I in England my services should be freely at the disposal of the Church at large for the introduction of this suggestion, if better judgments should be found willing to adopt it. But should I not be there, hundreds may be found to do it much more ample justice than I could; and in the hands of some such I should not despair of its being placed.

Another question which at the present moment really overwhelms me with anxiety: that is the question as to the lawfulness of continuing to administer the oath of Supremacy; that no foreign prelate has (by right) nor ought to have (in fact) any ecclesiastical jurisdiction within this realm, for thus I understand it - when by the omission of any interdict against the exercise of such jurisdiction here, the law seems (to my simple apprehension) to admit that the foreign prelate has and ought to have it: and very singularly pays a man £500 p.a. for doing in this diocese that very thing which he would be fined £100 for doing in England and Ireland.



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I observe with regret that Sir John Patteson has been obliged to retire from the Bench. He will now have leisure to apply his mind to general subjects, and will be under no such reserve I suppose as an actual judge must feel in giving an opinion. I would rather have his upon the subject of the oath than that of any other man in England. Do you think you could venture to ask it?

As to our own affairs, those of the Church are very quiet; the clergy universally well-disposed; and the laity also with very few exceptions. In fact there is among us I must say a most satisfactory leaven of real good sense; very unlike that wrong-headedness which has manifested itself in Adelaide and Tasmania. With respect to my suggestion for a combination of all the Churches under one regimen, I omitted one topic of great importance: namely that without such an extended and acknowledged  $\kappa\omicron\iota\nu\omega\nu\iota\kappa$ , I think the admission of the laity to deliberative functions will be hazardous. If in each of our small communions they feel that they are but parts of one stupendous whole, they will by a natural feeling of deference be led to adapt their views and tempers to the example set by the central body in England. But if they are set free from all connexion with that, and allowed to be all of them primaries instead of satellites they will run about knocking their heads together in a vast variety of eccentric orbits - "Cycle on epicycle, orb in orb" till we shall find, what shall I say "the motion stop or madness fire the wheels". Really I am in such a quotationizing (sic) humour that it is well there is no more room remaining than allows me to add, I am yours most truly, W.G. Sydney.

P.S. I have an infinite number of matters to write about if there were time and room. We are all in good health. I have received my kind old Rector and his very dear wife's Letter; and will reply to them soon. My kindest love and regards to you all. Did you receive the united Letter from the six Bishops addressed to you in October 1850? We have never heard whether you did.