

The Most Rev. & Hon. B. J. Plunket D. D.

Lord Bishop of Meath.

I enclose herewith a cutting from the Guardian of 6th. February concerning the Lusitanian Church, Catholic, Apostolic, Evangelical, which I hope your Lordship will be able to find time to read. It is our duty and delight heartily to thank God for the mercies He has given us hitherto. The blessings of the past encourage us to enlarge our ambitions for the future, and personally prove the power and lovingkindness of God.

It is now nearly fifty years since eleven priests in Portugal left the Church of Rome for conscientious reasons after the promulgation of the novel dogmas by the Vatican Council, and soon afterwards elected the Rev. Angel H. de Mora as their Bishop, anxious to prove thereby their devoted attachment to Apostolic Order and Catholic truth.

In 1880 (forty years ago) the Lusitanian Church was organised and the Rev. T. G. P. Pope D.D. an eminent theologian of a broad Catholic spirit was elected President of the Synod.

According to our Liturgy and General Bases the Lusitanian Church is free and independent of foreign jurisdiction, oversight, or control.

In 1891 Our Council of Bishops has to guard the purity and integrity of the Liturgy, and the Bases may not be altered save by the General Synod with the sanction of the Council of Bishops.

Our Synod never has, and never can delegate its power to nominate ministers, to license preachers, or to cancel licences to any foreign authority.

Your Lordship's venerable father, our greatly esteemed



their sincere sympathy with the members of the Lusitanian Church in their brave struggle in behalf of the Catholic, Apostolic, and Evangelical faith, and trust that with the blessing of Almighty God, they may increase in numbers and influence, and become a great power in their own land. The Bishops are most anxious to assist them in any way in their power, but regret that at present they cannot proceed to the consecration of a Bishop".

When the Rev. Canon T. G. P. Pope D.D. was on his death bed he sent for the Rev Candido Joaquim de Souza and said to him:- "The Lusitanian Church is independent, strive earnestly to maintain her independence". The same words were often repeated by Rev. Candido J de Souza the 2nd president of our Synod to all the ministers to those who visited him on his death bed.

During the life time of your venerable father, also during the life time of Dr Pope and the Rev Candido J. de Souza, for many years after the organization of the Lusitanian Church, the London Committee never exercised, nor claimed to exercise any control over the Lusitanian Church.

We are all grateful to the S. P. C. A. Sy for the disinterested and valuable aid given in paying the stipends of the clergy and supporting the schools of several congregations, but foreign oversight or control even when exercised as in the present case with the good intention smother self support, dries up the vitals discourages local contributions and efforts, tends to make the clergy dependent on foreign aid instead of seeking to increase their stipends if necessary by some secular employment, and is more prejudicial to the enlargement and development of an independent and National Church than the withdrawal of pecuniary aid. Our Synod never <sup>has</sup> lives, and <sup>has</sup> the proposer and seconder of the amendment, also the Rev. B. Canele wrote to the editor of Light & Truth.



never can delegate its powers to nominate ministers, to licence preachers or cancel licences to any foreign authority.

In a country like Portugal, where all my fellow countrymen are so jealous of any foreign interference or oversight, no foreign control can be allowed, because it is against the law of this country which it is our duty to obey, is against the wishes of a large majority of lay members, also prevents priests who left the Roman Church for conscientious reasons and whole congregations who are asking for a married clergy and a vernacular liturgy from joining us.

No less an authority than our great friend Dr W.E. Collins late Bishop of Gibraltar said it was far better that the clergy should seek to supplement their income by some secular employment than that they should be only dependent on foreign aid. I will as briefly as possible state a few facts.

Some years ago I was informed in writing (and I have preserved the letter) that without going into the merits of Sr Nogueiva's case the London Committee had decided that no Roman Catholic priest or student from a Roman Catholic seminary should be admitted into the Lusitanian Church... I did not believe this at the time but the treatment of A. Nogueira after 16 years of undisputed faithful testimony and some years of privation for conscience sake, shows I was mistaken.

The term "protestant" is not found in our liturgy or Formulae, we prefer the term "evangelical" for the reasons stated in declaration (5) proposed by the Rev. A. B. Cassels and printed in Light & Truth No 2 for 1912. Declaration (4) partly showing sympathy and partly depreciating the Old Catholics was removed by the Rev. A.B. Cassels, the proposer and seconder of the amendment, also the Rev. A. B. Cassels wrote to the editor of Light & Truth.



Unfortunately the S. & P.C.A.Sy, is supported by very few, if any, English Bishop presiding over a diocese and by only a few Irish Bishops, so it is only natural that the London Committee not having the support of the Bishops, seeks help from ultra protestants who do not care to see a bishop consecrated for the Lusitanian Church.

At a meeting of the Permanent Committee held at Gaia on the 20th January 1912, the Rev. A. B. Cassels proposed that A. Nogueira should be recommended to our Council of Bishops for ordination; all present, except the secretary, who said he would not vote either for or against, spoke highly of Nogueira's testimony and exemplary character and the president then promised to do all in his power to forward his ordination, and the following resolution was passed, a copy of which was given me by the secretary and is in my possession;- "That the president of the Synod and the Rev A.B.Cassels be commissioned to promote Snr Nogueira's case, seeing the great need our brother Diogo Cassels has of a coadjuter"; nevertheless the secretary wrote in the minutes;- "That the President and the Rev. A. B. Cassels were commissioned to promote the licensing of A.Nogueira although this was not even mentioned at the meeting, and Snr Nogueira was then licensed by the Synod, and his licence had not then been removed as it was at a meeting of the Synod a few months afterwards by a majority of one in the face of a threat sent by the London committee that if snr Nogueira's licence was not removed the members of our Council of Bishops would resign, and the S.& P.S.A.Sy would reconsider its position with regards to the Lusitanian Church.

Since January 1912 no meeting of the Permanent Committee has been held in the north of Portugal, so the minutes never have been and never can be approved by those present at the last meeting.

The president and most of the priests of the Lusitanian



Church are paid by the S & P.C.A.Sy. and naturally obey the instructions they receive from the London Committee, and when resolutions are passed contrary to their wishes, then they are not put into force

On two occasions in February 1911 and October 1916, memorials carefully worded and drawn up on large sheets of paper were unanimously voted to be sent to the Irish Bishops at Armagh thro' our Council of Bishops, but they never reached Armagh and never officially reached our Council of Bishops...

On one occasion the Memorial after long delay was returned to be altered, but I do not know what alterations were made, as it was never sent to me or to my representative to sign, although we had voted and signed the original memorial, and this is not the only time that resolutions purporting to have been passed by the Synod were sent round by courtesy by those who were not members of the synod, also those who had left before the resolution was passed.

At a meeting of our Synod held 11th May 1916 at the proposal of the Rev. A. B. Cassels, Dr Bernard then, Archbishop of Dublin was unanimously elected member of our Council of Bishops but, on the 22nd June, 1916, no copy of our resolution, and no request had been received by His Grace, so it is not surprising that under the circumstances he refused to accept.

At the next meeting of our Synod held 16 October 1919 I proposed that Dr. J. A. F. Gregg, Bishop of Ossorg should be elected a member of our council of Bishops in the place of Dr. Stack who had resigned some years ago. The president said he had no instructions and would not allow the election to take place.. So our Council of 3 Bishops remains incomplete, being composed of the Bishop of Clogher and your Lordship.

I have been informed that one reason why the London Committee had, not only to show us their sympathy, but also to help us in any



does not forward the election of a Bishop for the Lusitanian Church is because it fears that as I am the oldest member of the Synod I would be elected. Their fears are groundless because I am not and never was even a candidate; I am deeply sensible that I have not the tact, nor the required learning to think of being bishop; also, although we ought not to shrink from duty it would be a most difficult and unenviable position.

I have also been informed that the London Committee fears that the English bishop may find some technical impediment against the consecration of a bishop for a foreign country and may recommend us to apply to the Old Catholics. It is true that several Old Catholics Bishops have examined our Liturgy and Formulae, which they consider "excellent" and in no way contrary to theirs, and although they are ready to consecrate if a petition should be sent to them, they have no wish whatever to impose their uses or ceremonies upon a sister Church as each national Church can follow its own uses.

The Archbishop of Canterbury. When I last visited England in October 1912 His Grace called me by telephone to visit him, although he was very busy having just returned home and told me he was much interested in the Lusitanian Church as he had received a very favourable report of the work in the north of Portugal from Dr. W. E. Collins late Bishop of Gibraltar, whom he called his right hand man. His Grace authorized me to inform my colleagues that if the Lusitanian Church should send him a Memorial praying for the consecration of a native-born Bishop, the Memorial would be received with great interest and sympathy, and that if the Bishops convinced themselves that the reform movement in Portugal was spontaneous and free, not of foreign origin, then we might be certain that they would be encouraged, not only to shew us their sympathy, but also to help us in any



way consistent with our honour as a national independent church, and that the Memorial could be sent to him, the Archbishop, as soon as we wished, but it was necessary that the initiative should come from the Lusitanian Church.

In the year 1913 Dr. Knight, Bishop of Gibraltar told a deputation of priests of the Lusitanian Church who called upon him at Oporto that the Archbishop was most favourably inclined towards the Lusitanian Church and ready to receive a Memorial, but the London Committee sent instructions to our president that no memorial must be sent to Canterbury, as it would be equivalent to want of trust in the Irish Bishops, so nothing was done. Nobody wants to take our case out of the hands of the Irish Bishops if they are willing and able to consecrate a bishop for the Lusitanian Church, but I have been informed that the Irish Bishops are not likely to consecrate without the approval of the Lambeth Conference of Bishops.

Dr Knight also informed us that if there were any endowment towards the bishops stipend this would greatly facilitate matters and make the bishops more ready to consecrate.

In order to facilitate the consecration of a bishop for the Lusitanian Church at the subsequent meeting of our Synod I informed the members that in my Will I had left all my properties in Portugal of an unusual rental of at least 1250 escudos or £250 sterling at a normal exchange including two parsonages to the Lusitanian Church, and was quite ready that the bishop's stipend should be the first charge on the property as any active bishop would be in a position to collect money locally for Church expenses, Schools, and Charities. If a bishop should be consecrated for the north of Portugal it would be easy for him to act as priest in charge of one Church, and at the same time be overseer of the 4 Churches in the district of Gaia, one



at Oporto besides 4 missions, altogether 9 congregations.

At Lisbon the Lusitanian Church possesses valuable property with a rental sufficient to guarantee a modest stipend for a bishop who could act as a priest in charge of the one Church, and at the same time be overseer of the 3 Churches in Lisbon, one at Setubal besides 2 missions, altogether 6 congregations. We have a guarantee of a modest income for two native bishops.

The Lusitanian Church ought to have 2 bishops, one for the south of Portugal as soon as possible, and another for the north of Portugal after I am called to rest. If there were two bishops the work could be done more efficiently also without any extra expense and certainly more economically as travelling expenses would be brought to a minimum. Even after two bishops are consecrated whether by the Irish, or English or Old Catholic Bishops I am quite sure that all my colleagues would wish your Lordship, the son of our much revered protector to continue to act as a member of our Council of Bishops.

Notwithstanding all the difficulties and contretemps we have had during the last fifty years we have great reason to thank God for the increased influence, material prosperity (see several letters published in the Guardian) and good will from outsiders which He has given us, and if we work and do our duty I believe that we shall very shortly see a bishop consecrated for the Lusitanian Church. Let us trust him. Thy will be done. God often works in a mysterious way his wonders to perform.

I feel very grateful to your Lordship for the full sympathy expressed in your last letter and that you desire that the Lusitanian Church should have a bishop of its own and if the Church is to grow it must have a life of its own, so I trust your Lordship will bring

Thanking you very much for your most valuable interest in the



the consecration of a bishop before the Lambeth Conference of Bishops and if the Bishops approve of consecrating, or recommend us to apply to the Old Catholics, I cannot suppose that the London committee will prevent our immediately electing one of our number, as all the members of our Synod hold episcopacy to be a Divine Institution and necessary for the bene esse of the Church.

If an election is allowed to take place, I take for granted that the president the Rev Figueiredo will be elected. I think a better choice might be made, as Figueiredo was a Roman Catholic priest then a Methodist, afterwards a presbyterian, and now an episcopalian with ultra protestant tendencies even objecting to flowers or a plain cross being placed over the Holy Table (your venerable father said he would like to see a cross in every church) or to commevating the faithful de arted; yet even so I would be glad to see him consecrat- ed bishop, because it is proverbial, bishops, whatever their previous history become more Catholic, more of a Christ like spirit; let us hope and pray that this may be the case if he is consecrated.

When your Lordship brings the consecration of a bishop for the Lusitanian Church before the Lambeth Conference you can I believe count upon the co-operation of Dr. Gregg, Bishop of Ossory who several times has written to me also spoken in public saying that the Lusitanian Church ought to be independent of foreign rule.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Bishop of Gloucester, president of the Anglican & Foreign Church Society, and my brother Bishop of W China, now in England have frequently assured me that the Lusitanian Church ought to be independent from foreign rules and promised that they would do all in their power to promote the consecration of a bishop for Portugal.

Thanking you very much for your most valuable interest in the Lusitanian Church & praying God to bless your labour for His Glory. I remain, your Lordships obedient servant in Him