

Grey, Bart., briefly Colonial Secretary, had at last arrived. Its wording was somewhat tendentious:

Public opinion pointed to the Church Mission Society as the author of this Circular, and I regret to acquaint you that the result of our enquiries confirmed the fact, and places the onus of this mistaken and imprudent measure on a Member of that Body, who for some Months past has been detained professionally in Auckland.<sup>37</sup>

Apart from the charming irrelevancy of the last line Wynyard failed to name Grace, a pointed note in the Colonial Office, or to state that Grace himself had made a personal explanation. He did regret that he had not sufficient time to procure a copy of the circular itself but enclosed the press report.

In a minute to the permanent Under-Secretary Herman Merivale, Sydney Herbert, one of the three clerks who (as was customary) initialled it, said the document appeared to be 'a repetition of the mischievous course pursued by some of the Europeans in New Zealand . . .'. It was decided to send the letter to the Church Missionary Society for comment and at the same time to request the Society's cooperation in checking a course of action in view of the 'Disastrous consequences which might result from such an influence being Exerted on the Natives . . .'.<sup>38</sup>

The titular addressee, Henry Thomas Pelham, 3rd Earl of Chichester, for nearly half a century the Society's President, would have received a little earlier, perhaps by the same vessel which carried Wynyard's despatch, Grace's own explanation. The parent committee, having considered both, passed a resolution as follows:

That without questioning the propriety of Mr Grace's giving his advice to the Natives respecting the sale of their land, the Committee cannot but disapprove of the step he has taken of circulating an anonymous paper amongst the Natives calculated to stir up a prejudice against the Government and the Europeans in the country, as well as of the use he has made of Scripture for that purpose.<sup>39</sup>

It is clear that Grace's own statement, a copy of which has not so far been located, referred specifically to the FitzGerald declaration which, if carried out, 'would be fraught with ruin to the Natives, & great injury to the Colony, by causing Native lands to become again matters of wholesale speculation thereby putting a final stop to native industry & consequently to the prosperity of that part of the Colony'.

Grace was a man of strong Christian principle, unswerving resolution, great ability and, above all, enormous energy. Somewhat unusually among his brethren, he had had some years of business experience, probably in the weaving industry, before joining the Church. But for his faith he might have been a Tawney