

## The Church Times.

HALIFAX, SATURDAY, JULY 21, 1855.

## CONVOCAION.

The London *Guardian* received by the Steamship *Canada*, furnishes an account of the proceedings of Convocation, which met on Thursday 28th June. The chief subject that engrossed the attention of the body was the reform of the lower House. In the upper House the Bishop of London brought up the following Report from the Committee appointed during the last Session:

"The Committee of the Upper House of Convocation appointed to consider and report on an address to her Majesty on the subject of Church extension, as already reported on by a committee of both houses, report—That they have met and taken into consideration the subject committed to them. That there has been laid before them an opinion, signed by her Majesty's Solicitor-General and Dr. Robert Phillimore, M.P., pointing out a mode which, with the sanction of the Crown, would be both safe and easy for removing the anomalies at present existing in the representation of the clergy in the Lower House of Convocation.—That it appears to them most important that those anomalies should be corrected, in order that the houses may address themselves to the consideration of the great subject of Church extension with the fullest confidence of the Church in the clerical body which shall deliberate thereupon; and that they therefore report that, in their opinion, it is to this preliminary point that it would at this time be expedient to limit the address, to be presented to her Majesty, and that they have prepared accordingly the heads of such an address."

The Bishop of Oxford seconded and defended the adoption of the Report, which was objected by the Bishop of St. Asaph and the Archbishop of Canterbury, on the ground that it was making Convocation an active instead of a deliberative body, the Primate insisting that this was contrary to the promises of instruction made last Session. The following is the *Bill* submitted to the Crown officer, and Dr. Phillimore, to which the Report alludes:

CASE.—Whether it is competent to the Archbishop, upon a petition to that effect from both Houses of Convocation, by virtue of his own authority, in his mandate commanding the Dean of the province to summon the Bishops and Clergy of his province, to give special directions respecting the number of the proctors for the clergy to be returned from each diocese, the mode of their election, and the qualification of the electors, being spiritual persons, varying and enlarging the directions now contained in the mandate of the Archbishop. And whether such directions given by the Archbishop in his mandate would be a sufficient warrant to the Bishops and all returning officers to conduct the elections in conformity with such directions—the curia now existing in the several dioceses (which are neither uniform nor invariable), with regard to the election of proctors notwithstanding. And if you think the Archbishop's authority insufficient to effect the object proposed, you are requested further to state what course you would suggest for the purpose of giving the necessary validity to the Archbishop's directions.

OPINION.—"The writ to the Archbishop respecting the assembling of Convocation orders his Grace to summon the clergy (*clerum*), and is silent as to the manner and mode of their representation. It would seem that the mode of representation has varied at different times in different ways, and among them, by the omission, and addition of proctors. Nevertheless, it appears to us that it would not now be competent to Convocation to put a construction upon the word *clerus*, or *clergy*, so as thereby to enlarge the competency beyond the limits assigned to it by usage, without the consent and ratification of the Crown. We are of opinion that it would be competent to Convocation, having obtained the licence of the Crown, to discuss the question of the alteration of their respective body, and to make a canon enlarging it, and that such canon, if it subsequently obtained the approbation of the Crown, would be sufficient to effect, legally, a new representation of the clergy in Convocation."

—RICHARD BERNETT.  
—ROBERT PHILLIMORE.

After considerable discussion in which objections were urged by the Bishop of Lincoln, and the Bishop of Winchester, the House divided upon the adoption of the Report, which was carried 6 against 3; and the Bishop of Oxford then moved the following Resolution:

"That since the last meeting of this house, the house having received an opinion of her Majesty's Solicitor-General and Dr. Robert Phillimore, pointing out a safe and easy mode, if it should be sanctioned by her Majesty, of amending the representation of the clergy in the Lower House, to appear in this house that the reasons which led them at the last session, to postpone the consideration of this subject no longer exist, and that they can most effectually consult for the cause of Church extension, by seeking, at the first instance, an amendment of the representation of the clergy in the Lower House of Convocation."

This was also carried, as was the following Ad-

dress, on the motion of the Bishop of London who said it had been unanimously agreed to by the Committee of both Houses:—

"We, your Majesty's faithful subjects, the Archbishop, Bishops, and clergy of the province of Canterbury, assembled in Convocation, humbly represent to your Majesty that Committees of Convocation have met; and after careful consideration have reported to Convocation on various subjects, deeply concerning the spiritual welfare of this realm—viz., on the measures needful for enforcing discipline amongst the clergy, the extension of the Church, the modification of her services, and the reform of the representation of the clergy in the Provincial Synod of Canterbury."

"We are convinced that the full consideration of these subjects is of great moment to the well-being of our Church; but, in order that our deliberation on these, or on such other matters as your Majesty shall see fit to submit for our consideration, may be so conducted as to give to the Church the fullest satisfaction that in them the mind of the clergy will be fairly expressed, we humbly submit to your Majesty that the representation of the clergy in the Lower House of Convocation ought to be amended."

"On consulting very high legal authorities, we are informed that such an amendment may lawfully be carried into effect, if your Majesty shall be pleased to grant us your royal licence to consider with a view to agreeing on any such amendment; and shall afterwards approve of the same when submitted to your royal consideration."

"We venture, therefore, humbly to pray your Majesty to grant us your royal licence to consider of a constitution hereupon; and in order that these deliberations may include the clergy of the northern province, we further pray your Majesty to grant a similar licence to the Convocation of the Province of York, and to sanction our communicating with that body, with a view to uniting, under your Majesty's approval, our deliberations hereon."

The resolution and addresses were then communicated to the Lower House, and being read by the Prolocutor, were received with much cheering.

The address gave rise to an animated discussion in the Lower House, and an amendment to the words "modification of her services"—was negatived. On Friday the discussion was resumed—and an amendment to substitute words which should have a more general signification, were negatived.

On the second paragraph being proposed, Dr. McCaul was about to enter upon the question of the admission of the laity, when he was stopped by the Prolocutor.

Archdeacon Denison moved, and Mr. Chancellor Martin seconded, that after the words "on these" the sentence should read "or any other matters which your Majesty shall see fit." The amendment was agreed to.

The Dean of Bristol being of opinion that Convocation ought not to be amended, moved that the whole of the words in the last clause of the paragraph, beginning with "We humbly submit to your Majesty," be omitted. Mr. Cox seconded the amendment, which was put and negatived.

Mr. Canon Villiers proposed that in the last clause of the paragraph the words "Church" should be substituted for "clergy." He believed that the admission of the laity would give weight to their deliberations, and prove to be a real reform of Convocation. The Prolocutor said the rev. Canon was out of order. He could not permit any speaker to enter upon the general question, which had been already discussed. Mr. Cox seconded the amendment, which was lost, on a division, by a majority of 20 to 13.

Mr. Jebb then moved the omission of all the words of the last clause, and the substitution of the following:—"We humbly submit to your Majesty that it seems expedient to modify the representation of the clergy in the Lower House of Convocation." He would not object to a certain degree of reorganization, and he thought the parochial clergy should be more fully represented; but he could not pledge himself to the principle that the representative element in the Convocation was the most important, or to the declaration that the Convocation from time immemorial had been an inadequate representation of the clergy. The Prolocutor again interfered with the statement that the discussion on the general question was concluded yesterday, and could not be resumed. Mr. Jebb then threw himself upon the house. He thought that, in a matter of so much importance, not one step should be taken without ample deliberation and discussion. The Dean of Bristol expressed a similar opinion, and upon the Prolocutor putting the question to the house, whether the discussion should proceed, the affirmative was carried by a considerable majority. Mr. Jebb then supported his amendment, in a few remarks. On a division, the amendment was carried by a majority of 22 to 21, and the paragraph, as amended, was agreed to.

Mr. Hayward Cox objected altogether to the third paragraph of the address, on the ground that the Lower House had never joined in consulting "high legal authority." His objection was seconded by the Dean of Bristol, and carried without a division.

The first part of the fourth paragraph was objected to by Chancellor Martin, upon whose motion the words "consider of a constitution hereupon" were altered to "consider and agree upon a canon or constitution upon such modifications." On the last sentence, craving permission to deliberate with the Convocation of the province of York—

Dr. Reek moved that it be struck out. It was not their business to interfere in any way with the province of York. The amendment was agreed to, and the clause omitted.

The address as amended having been read, the Archbishop of Nottingham moved, and the Dean of Norwich seconded, that it be adopted. Mr. Vincent proposed, as an amendment, that the address be not agreed to. On a show of hands, the prolocutor declared the motion carried; whereupon Mr. Cox demanded a division, which took place, with the following result:—For the adoption of the address, 33; against it, 9.

On the motion of Mr. Chancellor Martin, the house agreed to request the Archbishop, should the Upper House concur in the address as amended, to communicate it to the province of York, with the view of securing their concurrence and co-operation.

The amended address was then communicated to the Upper House, which has been sitting during the day with closed doors, and was by them agreed to.

Other subjects were incidentally brought before the two houses. During the preceding debate Dr. McCaul proposed the following amendment, but at the request of several members, contented himself with placing it as a substantive resolution on the minutes, to be discussed next session:—

"That inasmuch as the Convocation of the province of Canterbury represents only a portion of the clergy of the United Church of England, and Ireland, and does not represent the Colonial Church at all, nor the laity, no addition to the number of its members or its constituency can make it competent to legislate for the whole Church, or to deal satisfactorily with grave questions affecting the whole body, such as the alteration of the Prayerbook or public worship—and as even the appearance of a wish to legislate on such subjects without first consulting the laity is likely in the present circumstances of the times to be injurious to the best interests of the Church, the Upper House be respectfully requested to join in an address to our most gracious Sovereign, praying that her Majesty would appoint a commission, composed of clergy and laity, to consider the necessities of the Church in the present times, and to advise such measures to be submitted to Parliament and Convocation as may by God's blessing be most likely to promote the spiritual welfare of the whole British empire."

The subjects of Church Rates, Secretaries' Fees, Queen's Letters, &c., also engaged the attention of the lower House.

The Clergy and the Representatives of the Laity of the Diocese are requested to take notice, that Thursday, October 11th, at 10 A.M., is appointed for the Meeting of the Diocesan Assembly, to consider the Report of the Committees appointed at its last Meeting to "prepare rules and regulations for the Church Assembly." The Session may be continued from day to day at the pleasure of the Assembly.

We are glad to learn that Salem Chapel, built for the Congregationalists, has been rented by the Lord Bishop of the Diocese, and that Divine Service according to the forms of the Church of England, will be celebrated therein in September next. The necessity for a place of worship, in connection with the Church, where members of her communion transiently among us, may find a seat on the Sabbath; and where the many seamen and others who frequent the port could attend divine worship; and where that class "who are always with us", who might be prevented from attending other churches, by accidental causes, may join in the services of the Sanctuary, and have the Gospel preached to them, has long been evident—and we rejoice to hear that through the liberality of the Bishop, the want will now be supplied. The Scots will be all free in Salem Chapel; and we hope it will prove "an open door that no man can shut."

We perceive that symptoms of disunion are already beginning to manifest themselves in the ranks of the more recent Dissenters from the Church of Scotland. The Disruption was a national calamity—but that a body of men inspired with such a furor of religious zeal as was conspicuous at the time, should exhibit within a few years a divisional tendency, proves that many considerations of a worldly nature, and much of the obstinacy of spiritual pride, were large ingredients in the Secession; and that the alleged grandeur or sublimity of the movement was not to be measured altogether by the standard of honest principle. While the Free Church is becoming weak by intestine disorder, the Established Church of Scotland is quietly but steadily pursuing her work, and appears in a fair way to recover from the wounds inflicted upon her in the house of her friends.

The Annual Meeting of the Newfoundland Church Society took place at St. John's, on Tuesday evening, July 3, in the School Room. The Lord Bishop in the Chair. Our latest Newfoundland papers are to July 4, and they furnish no particulars.