

the Church of England had the power, under the sanction of the Sovereign, of setting anything for herself, or whether she was to take the humiliating attitude of saying that either there was such a want of spiritual wisdom in her community, or such deep internal disorders amongst her members, that it was impossible for her alone, or any body temporal or spiritual of which she had any knowledge, in any way to provide for emergent necessities by new legislation. When they considered that the last Church law for the Church's regulation was something like two centuries old, and that in that time the population of England had increased, he dared not say how many fold, he for one thought, without entering into detail, a sufficient case was made out why some internal action should be needful for the Church; but, if they considered how the Church was circumstanced—that she had definite rubrics for ritual observances, and that whilst, to carry out perfectly the ritual as defined by those rubrics would, probably, in almost every populous district give rise to injurious commotions and disturbances: on the other hand, the ministers of the Church were bound by the most solemn obligations to observe those rubrics and that ritual, and that no authority was alleged to exist anywhere for dispensing with the stringency of any one of those rubrics, they would see, that just in proportion as the ministers of the Church became more conscientious, more alive to their responsibilities, more awake to what they had engaged to perform, the yoke imposed on them, by requiring them to declare that they would administer the ritual in one way, whilst they were practically obliged to administer it in another, in the absence of any dispensing power, became most intolerable to the consciences of thinking men. (Hear, hear.) Then, again, if they considered that the first condition of spiritual life in the Church was that it should contain new methods for meeting new evils—new hands of mercy reached out, in order that it might gather in to Christ's salvation the multitude committed to it—they would see that whilst an unaltered, antiquated system, with all its rigidity, might do in the time of the Church's sleep and inaction, it could not do in the time of her wakefulness and vigour; and that, if it pleased God to give such a revival to the Church's zeal, and they neglected to provide the means of adapting the system to the requirements of the population, it must end in her being torn by intestine throes which would threaten her very organisation and existence—that some, seeing the greatness of the need, would resolve at all risks to supply that spiritual necessity which pressed with such overwhelming weight on their spiritual consciousness. That others, having a high sense of the necessity of order, yet groaning at being unable to meet the Church's need, would still be determined to obey at all costs, and thus the most conscientious and most earnest-minded men would be divided and suspicious of one another, those who disregarded the Church's ordinances, that they might meet the requirements of the time, would naturally look on the lovers of order as bigots, whilst those who observed the Church's strict orders would look upon them as enthusiasts; and that, instead of the Church joining harmoniously together in the common service of God, those who dearly loved her rule of order, and those who would gladly spend their heart's blood to save the souls of those committed to her charge, she would, by keeping to an impossible rule, divide those who should be united, and introduce into her own body all the evils of the worst dissensions. And from those evils, in his opinion, might emanate evils still higher; because there would arise a suspicion that these external differences were the result of a real and vital difference of belief; that, instead of the Church being able to defend or explain, as need might be, her doctrinal statements, she was bound by a rigid and unalterable external law to words which might be explained away until they meant everything to one man and nothing to another; and persons who, from a different constitution of mind, merely saw the same truths in a different relation to other truths, would suspect each other of mutual insincerity. Thus, instead of being able, as he conceived they could do, to ascertain the great common ground of truth from which, with the fullest confidence in each other's honesty, they could teach the same truth in certain different relations to other truths, they would be led to believe that each ought not to belong to the common land, and so would spread distrust and hatred in what ought to be the united body of Christ's people. (Hear, hear.) He feared another evil, which he thanked God they had not yet reached. Dim shapes of evil possible in the future, had, when meditating on this subject, passed before his eyes—that as truth was the foundation of all revealed religion, and that as moral honesty and truth must lie below every particular revelation, the time might come when even that true basis of all teaching might be endangered. For although there might be a different mode of viewing the relation as one common truth to other truths, the moment they came to the conviction that they disagreed fundamentally as to truth, it must be dishonest to them to continue united in the common teaching body. They might agree to differ with their brethren in the modes of stating many things, but not as to fundamental truth. If they were to agree that the Church might combine parties who fundamentally differed, they would be agreeing to a dishonest position; and he thought that the greatest evil of all, because they would really become the sappers of the moral honesty of the most morally honest people whom he believed God had given to the training of His Church. To prevent the recurrence of this evil, he thought there was a fundamental necessity that the Church should have the power of acting most

gravely, most deliberately, most slowly, and by the fairest possible representation of the whole body, each in their respective parts—the clergy in their part, the laity in their part—so as to adapt her institutions and organisation to the needs of the existing time, and so as freely to discuss points of difference. To suppose the Convocation of the province of Canterbury, as it now existed, could in any sense be such a representation, seemed to him to be simply absurd. The representation of the parochial clergy was not only utterly insufficient, but the mode by which it was obtained was full of every kind of contradiction. At the time when the cathedral system was in full vigour and full intelligence, and the parochial clergy were comparatively uneducated, it was natural there should be a large preponderance given to the cathedral body over the parochial body; but the state of things was greatly changed, and the present representation was one which never could give satisfaction to the Church. Therefore he said, first, there was a need of having a reformed body to whom, if it should so please God to incline the heart of the Church's supreme governor in this land, might be committed the grave question, whether in any, and if so, in what, way the clergy and laity ought to be made together to contribute to the Church's strength and usefulness, and next, that that was to be obtained only by the slow and gradual steps adopted in this Convocation; and further, that this body must consider the plan of its own reform before it attempted to deal with the far wider question of the due representation of the Church at large. It might be years before they arrived at a conclusion; perhaps so much the better. He was not one of those enthusiasts who thought they were ready at the present moment. He believed the process of educating a Church for the use of such power must be gradual; and that it was not unjust to require them, by their use of such limited means as they possessed, to show that more power might be safely granted to them. (Hear, hear.) It had been broadly charged against himself personally, that he and those who agreed with him had acted in a very treacherous way; that, instead of rising in their places in Parliament, and making a motion on this subject, where it could be discussed by the estates of Parliament, they had been endeavouring to get Convocation, little by little, in action, in order to grasp undue power, and in that way establish a sort of spiritual despotism. He hoped what he had said would tend to dispel the delusion. The reason why they had so acted in Convocation was that there was no other way in which they lawfully could act. That they had done the very least each time had been, he trusted, owing to God's gift of moderation and patience to them. Certainly there had been no concealment. His right reverend brethren knew, and would do him the justice to confirm it, that at the first opening of this Convocation he laid before them his whole plan, with the most perfect openness, and it was only by the accident of that speech not going forth to the public, and the speeches which followed going forth to the public, there could be any possible imputation that he had anything to conceal. He thought it a matter of importance that their plan of action should be generally known, for he believed, if known, it would be appreciated. He did not believe that in the body of the Church there would when the question was really understood, be any jealousy of such action as they desired. He believed the jealousy which existed arose from, he would not say intentional, but most unfortunately habitual, misrepresentation of what their purpose was. He believed that, if it went abroad that their object was to enable the Church at large, in her several orders, by the maturest council, to adapt herself to the necessities of her people, that no jealousy would exist upon the matter. He believed it would be granted to them that it was an absurdity and a wrong to endeavour to exhibit a great spiritual body, with a minute set of rules impossible to be observed, and with no dispensing power to allow for their neglect—that it was a grievance to tender consciences—that it was a premium to dishonest action—that it led to those miserable outbreaks which they had seen in one place and another in the land, when Lynch law, without its American justice, had been endeavoured to be inflicted on those of whom the worst that could be said was, that they very unwisely endeavoured to be literally exact in their obedience to the Church's rules. He believed that the body of the laity of the Church of England, if they understood fully what their purpose was, would give them effectual support in obtaining it. It was quite impossible the Commons' House of Parliament could give the time necessary to a minute examination of the matters to be considered. With the pressing wants of this great empire consuming their whole time, it was perfectly impossible that they could act as the Church's internal legislature, to consider what the Church needed. Another reason why they were unfit for the task was to be found in their own constitution. What remained? Certainly, for the clergy and laity to consider these things, and, where needful, come to Parliament to sanction their recommendations. As to the possibility of oppressing the laity, it was most unreasonable, because the conclusion of such a body did not bind the laity until Parliament had agreed to it. It would, therefore, at the most, with the consent of the Crown, be only binding on the clergy, and without that consent it would not be binding at all. That was one of the bugbears which infested dark places, and the sooner got rid of the better. In asking for that progressive amelioration of ancient external rules which every other body needed, and could get, they were not to be put down by such cries as that. If God be with the Church of

England, her Bishops, clergy, and laity were surely able, under God's guidance, to decide what was best for her development and increase. If God be with her—if His truth be not lodged with her, if her orders were a sham—he for one said, the sooner that was shown to him and every one of them the better; but he believed firmly in her divine mission, and believing in it, he believed that the blessing of the Almighty, who gave wisdom, peace, and strength, it was for her to invoke, by setting herself clearly to see what she needed now, and not by falling back on antiquated prescriptions and impossible rules. (Hear, hear.)

The Bishop of Landaff rose to move, "To appoint a committee of this house, and to direct the Lower House to name seven of its members to consult with it, when summoned, to consider and report to this house whether the great increase and present condition of the population does not make some, and what, adaptations of the Church's rule needful, to meet the Church's needs."

His Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury could assure the house that nothing he had said in reference to the former motion would apply to the present, the object of which, he thought, was exceedingly desirable.

The motion was agreed to, the Bishop of Winchester alone dissenting.

The following committee was named—The Bishops of Landaff, London, Worcester, St David's, Llandaff, Chichester, Oxford, and Lichfield.

The Prolocutor of the Lower House was then summoned, when his grace communicated to him the two resolutions which had been adopted, and intimated that the Lower House was to appoint seven of their number to act upon each of the committees.

News Department.

From Papers by R. M. S. Arabia, March 4

HOUSE OF COMMONS, FEB. 24.

SYNODAL ACTION OF THE CHURCH IN THE COLONIES.

The Solicitor-General rose to ask leave to bring a bill having for its object the removal of certain disabilities affecting members of the Colonial Church. According to the statute passed in the reign of Henry VIII, it was illegal for persons to assemble either for the purpose of conferring together, or completing any arrangement with reference to matters bearing on ecclesiastical affairs. Nor was it within the power of any such body either lay or clerical, or both, to make any order or canon without the authority of the Crown having been first obtained; and the effect of that prohibition was that in a great many respects the Church of England in the colonies enjoyed a much less degree of liberty of action than that possessed by other denominations. The necessity of affording the proposed relief was evident from the fact that it was impossible for a bishop to have his usual visitation carried out as by law prescribed. At present the bishop exercised a despotic power, inasmuch as he was now empowered upon any representation, perhaps the truth of which he was unable to determine, to deprive a clergyman of his license, and with that of course to deprive him of the stipend which he received from the colonial legislature. In the bill which he proposed to introduce he had endeavoured to embody the collective sentiments of both sides of the House; and it declared that the clergy while in the colonies performing duties should be authorised as well as their lay brethren, to hold meetings on the subject of ecclesiastical affairs, though he was at the same time most careful to guard against the decisions of any such meetings having the force or efficacy of law.

Mr. Henley did not oppose the introduction of the bill; and expressing a hope that it should not interfere with the royal supremacy, said he should reserve any expression of opinion upon the measure until it was printed and in the hands of members.

Mr. R. Phillimore approved of the bill, which did more than place the Church of England on the same footing as other religious bodies in the colonies.

The Attorney General having assured Mr. Henley that the bill would not affect the royal supremacy the motion was agreed to, and the bill subsequently ordered for second reading on Wednesday week.

THE CHAPLAIN-GENERAL, the Rev. C. R. Glyn, announces that the Secretary-at-War has not overlooked the spiritual wants of the army now proceeding to the East. The names of the chaplains will appear in Tuesday's Gazette. The Naval and Military Bazaar Society has furnished a copy of the New Testament to every soldier. "The spiritual wants (says Mr. Glyn) of all denominations have been remembered."

PREPARATIONS FOR WAR.—In order to secure co-operation between the allied armies in the approaching campaign in the East, Lord Raglan, accompanied by Lord de Roos, started for Paris on Saturday, in order to consult personally with the chiefs of the French military army on the plan of operations to be pursued. Lord Raglan stayed but a short time owing to the attention which is required from him in superintending the despatch of troops at home. Lord Raglan will proceed to the Mediterranean till all the arrangements connected with the despatch of troops have been completed, by which time Sir John Burgoyne will have