

essentials to her efficiency within the Colony and at the same time preserve harmony with the Mother Church.

And surely the little delay required in pursuing this course need not be grudged after allowing 20 years and more to pass without doing anything, when the result may be the digesting and maturing a respectable, safe and rational scheme which would give full efficiency to the United Church of England and Ireland, and insure through all future time among her numerous branches, perfect unity in all parts of the world.

Besides the Bishops and such of their Clergy as visit England on this important object, those who remain in their Dioceses are expected to give their own views, and in as far as may be those of their Clergy and Laity, so that the result may be justly considered the voice of the Colonial Church at large.

Now, although we may not reckon very much upon the positive benefit to be derived from the multitude of suggestions which will be brought forward, yet there would be the advantage of considering beforehand, whatever would be likely to be urged in the Colonies for or against the Act before it had passed. Besides the moral effect would be of great value by shewing the members of the Church in the Colonies, that a measure so important had not been agreed upon without due reference to their wishes and sentiments,—and in the next place it would be much more easy to support the system afterwards against any attempts to unsettle it as being a system established on mature consideration, and with a desire to meet the views and opinions of the various Colonies.

Even after all this previous care and deliberation, it might be wise to limit the continuance of the measure on its first enactment to four or five years, and in the meantime to invite an expression of opinion from the different Colonies as to the working of its various provisions, so that it may be made as perfect as possible before it becomes a permanent law.

The system by which the Episcopal Church in the United States of America is governed, and that in Scotland, would naturally be considered in framing the Constitution of the Colonial Church, and some hints might possibly be derived even from the footing on which the Protestant Church has been placed by the late Acts of the Government in France.

The members of the Episcopal Church of the United States were unavoidably influenced in laying the foundation of their system by considerations which do not apply in our case. They would not submit to a controlling power in a Foreign Country, for that would have placed their Church in a disadvantageous light before the public.

With us there need not be, and is not in fact any jealousy of the kind: on the contrary, I believe the general feeling of the Laity as well as the Clergy at present would be found to be in favour of seeking security against error and against rash changes by having all material points subject to the control of the Mother Church, and not left to be debated or resolved upon by Colonial Conventions or Conventions.

Let us suppose then a Constitution framed in England under the best advice and upon mature consideration, the most desirable course would, I think, be to give that Church Constitution to the Colonies by an Imperial Statute.

But here, we apprehend, a difficulty will present itself, if the Bill should go into such details in regard to Church government and discipline as it ought to do. Would the House of Commons entertain it? and would the Government ask them to do so with the hope of a satisfactory result? I hope they could: but I fear they could not.

If the Government could and would proceed in that manner, and if a Statute could be passed, approved of by the heads of the Church and placing the Church of England in the Colonies on firmer ground as to doctrine and discipline, a very great object would be gained, because then the Convocation or whatever it might be called, within each Diocese, not having these matters within their reach (and I think they ought not) would be occupied only in such things as would not disturb the unity of

the Church, that is, in enforcing the power given by the Constitution in regard to discipline, and in regulating and advancing her temporal interests.

This great advantage would follow from having our System of Church Government resting on such a foundation, as could not be readily disturbed; for it would not be easy to procure any alteration of what had been so carefully considered. And we might hope that the Constitution would be found to be sustained by the general voice of the Colonies, although there might be an unfortunate spirit prevailing at times in one or two of them that would unsettle any sound System, if it could have its way.

If it should be found that the Government would decline attempting to procure from Parliament a measure which should go sufficiently into details, the next best thing would seem to be to proceed, at any rate, as has been suggested, in devising a Constitution by consultation among Colonial Bishops, and with the Government and Spiritual Heads of the Church of England, and then providing for a Convention of the members of the Church of England, Lay and Clerical, in due form in each Colony, and submitting the Constitution for their adoption. The great object would be to gain the assent of the Colonial Church to a Constitution settling all cardinal points and placing them beyond the influence of disturbing forces within the separate Dioceses, which might destroy the unity of the Church and impair its resemblance to the Church of England in England.

We must all agree with Sir John Pakington in objecting to the plan of setting each Diocese separately to work to lay down a system of managing their Ecclesiastical affairs. Some points of vital importance to the Church might, I fear, be placed either at once or in time, under the influence of various causes, on so inconsistent a footing in the different Dioceses that the Church of England would no longer seem to be one Church in the Colonies, and we should have some crotchet established under peculiar circumstances in one Diocese which would tend to unsettle the Church in other quarters, when, without such example, the proposition would have received no encouragement. Moreover, the preponderating element in the population of a particular Colony—the tone of public feeling on various questions—the accidental circumstance of the personal character of the Bishop who would first have to set the machinery in motion—his discretion, his firmness, and ability to resist pressure, and various other circumstances, would be almost certain to bring about different results—and possibly, in some Colonies, results that would be much regretted, and ought to be deprecated in all.

And besides, there may be differences in the present actual condition of the several Colonial Dioceses which could hardly fail to occasion a far greater diversity than ought to prevail in one Church in regard to matters of common interest.

CONSTITUTION.

The Members of the Church of England in the Colonies, desire in the first place, that the Constitution, or Act for the better government of the Church in the Colonies, should acknowledge the Supremacy of Her Majesty over all persons in all causes, Ecclesiastical as well as Civil, within her dominions. We are deeply sensible of the necessity of preserving that Supremacy unimpaired, and are determined, in so far as in us lies, to maintain and defend it.

We desire, in the second place, that provision be made that the Church shall continue, as we have ever been, an Integral portion of the United Church of England and Ireland—enjoying the true Canon of Holy Scripture as our Rule of Faith—acknowledging the three Creeds as an authentic interpretation of Holy Scripture as they are embodied in the Liturgy, maintaining the Apostolic Form of Church Government by Bishops, Priests and Deacons—and we declare our firm and unanimous resolution in dependance on the Divine aid, to maintain those benefits, and transmit them unimpaired to posterity.