

State accords to us, the respect, recognition, and protection which are due to a Society of Christian men; while, at the same time, we are free from State control in every matter of discipline and doctrine.

The entireness, the absolute character of this independence, is most remarkable; presenting, as it does, so strong a contrast to the position of the Church at home, and to what was our own position not many years back. Perhaps we have scarcely yet realized the powers of our position.

Whether in the inception of the movement fourteen years ago, it was contemplated that our independent power of self-government would grow to what it is, I can hardly say. When we recall to mind how slow and hesitating were our first steps in this direction—how we were first summoned together simply as a “Conference,” in doubt whether we were not infringing certain ancient laws by which Synods and Convocations of the Church of England were fettered—when we review our proceedings up to the passing of the Synod Act of 1857, we may well congratulate ourselves upon the degree of Christian liberty which we have achieved; and we must also acknowledge that the caution exercised by those who guided the movement, though more than some of us then thought necessary, was yet, considering the momentous change in progress, in an eminent degree wise and prudent.

I think I may venture to say, that since the Reformation there has not taken place within the Church of England a greater revolution than that which has been gradually and peaceably matured here within the last fourteen years. I say *peaceably*, and with a purpose; for it should be a cause of thankfulness that it has been accomplished without strife or contention—without any struggle with the Provincial or Imperial authorities—without any estrangement or alienation of feelings between ourselves and the Mother Church, —without any rupture, or even weakening, of those ties of loyalty and affection which bind, and I trust may long continue to bind, us to the Church of England and to the Crown