

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE PAN-ANGLICAN COUNCIL;

*Presented in the Lower House of the Convocation of Canterbury,
June 26, 1866.*

II. In reporting upon the matter entrusted to them, your Committee have to state that they understand that it was intended in the Address of the Metropolitan Synod of the Canadian Church that such a Council as they now propose should be confined to the United Church of England and Ireland; together with those branches of it which exist in the dependencies of the British Crown.

Your Committee are, however, of opinion that the thing most to be desired is a Council, comprising the American and Scottish branches of the Anglican Communion, together with all the branches of the United Church of England and Ireland and its Independent Missionary Churches: not as in any manner or degree superseding or interfering with Provincial or National Synods, but as supplying the best means whereby such Churches may take council together upon matters of common concern or interest, and may thus more effectually guard their common inheritance.

In the event, however of insurmountable obstacles being found to arise in the way of assembling such a Council, which they see no sufficient cause to apprehend, your Committee are of opinion that no time should be lost in convening a representation of the Churches in lands subject to the British Crown, for the consideration of the special difficulties affecting those Churches, or some of them, at the present time, in respect to their relations to one another, and to the Mother Church.

III. Your Committee proceed to consider:

Some principal advantages to be derived from a Council of the several Churches constituting the Anglican Communion.

Whether there be any substantial difficulties in the way of such a Council.

If there be any such, in what manner they may be best disposed of.

The principal advantages appear to be these:

1. To afford an opportunity for the Churches of the Anglican Communion to confer together upon questions or errors which may appear in these days to imperil the acceptance of "The Faith once delivered to the Saints."

2. To provide a broad basis upon which to found attempts to bring about Intercommunion with other portions of the Church Catholic. The blessings of a reunited Christendom is to be longed and prayed for. But, short of this, there may be degrees of Intercommunion; and while, on the one hand, your Committee believe that it is for the Church of England to take the lead among Churches in this great matter; on the other, they submit that all the Churches of the Anglican Communion have a claim to be consulted upon it: nor, again, can they forget that it is the Church of the United States which has originated in our times that movement towards Intercommunion with the Russo-Greek Church, with which the Provincial Synod of Canterbury has recently co-operated.

3. The discussion and affirmation of the common principle of "a right ecclesiastical discipline" as "one of the notes of the true Church" [Homily for Whitsunday]; to be applied by the several Churches represented therein, each one to itself, according to its own wisdom, legislative powers, and opportunities of action.

4. The consideration of the principles upon which Constitutions and Canons applicable to the whole body of the Anglican Communion may best be framed; to be reduced into practice subsequently, as may be found advisable by each Church for itself.