

agreeing either among themselves or with their Lay brethren, upon any regulations which might be necessary for conducting their Ecclesiastical affairs. By a Statute of Henry VIII., the Clergy were prohibited from meeting together to make any ordinances, canons or statutes, without being summoned for that purpose by the Crown; and, as by a Statute of Elizabeth the supremacy of the Crown was declared to extend to all its dominions, now, as well as old, any meeting of the Clergy in the Colonies for the purposes mentioned would be clearly illegal. It was to remove this disability that this Bill was introduced, but he had been extremely careful in drawing it up not to give the Clergy any power to invest the arrangements which might be made in these Meetings with any binding force or authority. The Bill would simply relieve the Clergy from the disadvantages under which they at present laboured, without giving them any additional power whatever. The Bill I refer to reads thus: "Bill to relieve the Clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland, resident in the Colonies, from any disability as to the holding of Meetings in such Colonies for the regulation of Ecclesiastical affairs therein.

"Whereas, by reason of the Laws, Statutes and Ordinances, which affect or bind the Bishops and Clergy of the United Church of England and Ireland, doubts may exist whether the Bishop and Clergy of the said Church, resident and performing spiritual duties in the colonial possessions of Her Majesty, can lawfully hold or be present at meetings of the Bishops, Clergy and Lay persons, professing to be Members of the said Church in any Colony, for the purpose of agreeing on rules and regulations touching Ecclesiastical affairs; and it is expedient that such Bishops and Clergy should be relieved from any such disability—Be it declared and enacted by the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal and Commons, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows—

"1. No Statute, Law, Rule, Usage, or other Authority of the United Kingdom, shall extend or be construed to prevent the Metropolitan of any Province, or the Bishop of any Diocese in the Colonies of Her Majesty, together with his Clergy and the Lay persons of such Province or Diocese, being Members of the United Church of England and Ireland, from meeting together from time to time, for the purpose at such meetings of making or entering into any such regulations, agreements or arrangements, as local circumstances shall in their judgment render necessary for the management or conduct of Ecclesiastical affairs within such Province or Diocese: Provided always, that such Meetings, or the regulations, agreements and arrangements that may be made thereat, shall not obtain any force or authority from the enactments hereby made."

It will be seen that this Bill merely consists of an enabling clause, and confers on the Colonial Church no positive power whatever, but simply relieves it from any disability as to the holding of meetings in such Colonies for the regulation of Ecclesiastical affairs therein. The enacting clause appears so very reasonable, that it was impossible to anticipate any objections, but ignorance and presumption have, it appears, called up so many fears and difficulties, that the friends of the measure, not perhaps at any time particularly zealous, are getting so disgusted at the opposition, or so indifferent to its success, that from the last accounts it is thought that it will not pass; indeed, an opinion seems to be gaining ground that it is impossible to clear away the terrors and suspicions so pertinaciously urged by the enemies of the Church, and that

no Bill can be drawn up in such a way as to avoid giving them offence. Nor is this to be wondered at, when the bitterness and ignorance of those who led the opposition against the Colonial Church are taken into consideration. The Bill consists of one solitary clause, and because they could not attack sentences they fell upon words, and consumed five hours in discussing four lines. One Member considered Metropolitan of any Province, or Bishop of any Diocese, insidious and dangerous. Another, that the Bill was most mischievous and unnecessary, and carried with it all the State functions of the Church of England. A third was filled with horror at the title given to Colonial Bishops by usage and courtesy. In fact, the debate in Committee on the Bill is one of the most melancholy exhibitions of Parliamentary proceedings ever recorded, and from the absurdity of the assertions and their innocence of all truth, would rather be a source of ridicule and merriment, were it not for the grave importance of the subject and the profound hatred of the Church which is displayed, and the very few friends who came heartily forward in her defence. It is true the Honorable Mr. Walpole gave a clear view of the practical grievances which the measure sought to remove, and of the beneficial results which might be expected from its enactment; but the House seemed to get only the more confused and dissatisfied, till wearied out, the Solicitor General consented to take the Bill home, with the view of so wording it as to obviate all objections.

Among other things, the debate evinces the inability of the opponents of the Bill to comprehend or to acknowledge any other connection between the Mother and Colonial Church than an establishment; they seem to have a conception of such a thing as a spiritual connection between the Mother Church and her branches in the Colonies. As to unity of faith and doctrine—full and entire communion in belief and profession—the freest interchange of sentiments and counsels—mutual arrangements on jurisdiction and missions, which constitute the essence of Catholic Unity—they despise, or cannot comprehend such things.

As to the brevity of the measure, which its friends consider its chief recommendation, I must be allowed to differ, and to prefer the measure brought in by the Archbishop last summer as in every respect superior. The present Bill settles nothing—it does not even indicate the direction in which on any point we ought to proceed. Doubtless our attachment to the Parent Church, and our intimate knowledge of her workings, will preserve us from any serious deviations—yet some landmarks laid down and hallowed by the Fathers of the Church as the Archbishop's Bill presents, are precious, and though laid aside as an enactment, they may still be used to good purpose. Indeed, a short reference to its provisions will amply shew this. It was introduced into the House of Lords in July, 1853, for the purpose of giving liberty of Synodical action to the Colonial Churches, and carried through all its stages without a division. In drawing up this Act the Primate was assisted by the Bishop of Sydney and several Colonial Bishops at that time in London, and also by the Bishops of London and Oxford and several other Prelates who take an interest in the Colonies; it is framed with great care, and was minutely revised before it received the approval of the Government. The Bill appears fairly to embody all those enactments which are required to form the Charter of the Colonial Church if she is ever to have one, and will become the era from which she will count, not her establishment, but her power of establishing herself throughout all our Colonies—past, present and future.

The effect of the Bill is simply to enable every Diocese and every Province to hold from time to time a Synod or Assembly, consisting of the Bishop, Clergy and Representatives of the Laity, by which regulations are to be framed for the management of the affairs of the United Church of England and Ireland within such Diocese or Province, as the case may be, and for the conduct of spiritual discipline, and generally for the guidance and government of the Ministers and Members of the said Church within such Diocese or Province. These regulations to be binding on none but members of the Church, and upon them only so far as concerns their position, rights, duties and liabilities, in respect of their Ministry or Church Membership; nor is any regulation to be valid where it clashes with the Law of the Colony, or is at variance with the Prayer Book or Articles. The Lay Members to be communicants of twelve months' standing, and the same qualifications for an Elector. The Bill is simply enabling—it implies protection as opposed to direct interference—the Church is to govern herself—and the result will, we trust, prove the justice and wisdom of the measure, and make it what it promises to be, the very Charter and Foundation of the Colonial Church.

In reference to the measure now before Parliament, weak and incomplete as it is, we cannot with propriety proceed so long as it is not disposed of, but when that time arrives, as it will to all appearance soon, we may infer without presumption, that owing to the mixed Constitution of the House of Commons, the great questions regarding the Colonial Church, will, in all probability, be found insoluble by any prior legislation, and that it remains for us to proceed in the most wise and honest path that we can find, to give them solution by experiment and experience. Should, therefore, this Session of Parliament close without any measure for the relief of the Colonial Church, it seems to be our duty to proceed with our Synods, adopting for our guidance the Archbishop's Bill. In taking this course we shall run no great risk; on the contrary, if we act wisely, and adopt such practical measures as shall give efficiency and extension to our Church, our opponents may be disarmed when they see that all our objects are for good, and thus leave the Imperial Legislature to give us that support which it is endeavouring now to do in vain. Unless some course of this kind is pursued, how is Parliament to see what is wanted, and the things to be remedied?—all at present appears to a large portion of that body, visionary or dangerous. In fine, I would suggest that waiting for the action of Parliament, no proceedings be taken by the Committee at this time, but that it adjourn to the 18th day of October next, and then to meet with power to add to its number. If a measure shall have passed the Imperial Legislature, it will become of course the foundation of our proceedings in carrying out the Resolution of October last; if not, I would advise the adoption of the Archbishop's Bill as our basis or Constitution, till a better is provided by Parliament for the direction and guidance of the Synod in its deliberations and management of our Ecclesiastical affairs. Thus, in either case, the Committee will have work to perform and duties to discharge.

After some conversation amongst the members of the Committee,

It was moved by the Honorable P. B. De Blaquier and seconded by Hugh C. Baker, Esq., and

*Resolved*, That the unexpected difficulty which has arisen in the British House of Commons in passing a Bill to enable the Colonial Churches to make provision for their self-government, induces this Committee of the Synod of the United