

Church News.

ENGLAND.—With the instinctive feeling that the decisions of all Church councils would be against them, the Arians of old were always great Church-and-State men, *i.e.* were always in favour of appealing to the State to revise the decisions of the Church. So it is with the Colensoites and free-thinkers of the present day, who moreover are endeavouring to bring to their side in this matter such timid Churchmen as those who fancy that freedom from State interference in matters of faith, means rebellion against the lawful Sovereign. Dissenters of every persuasion regulate their own ecclesiastical affairs without the assistance of lawyers or legislators of adverse religious opinions. The Protestant Episcopal Church in the States of America manages to flourish and grow without the shadow of such interference. The Professor of International Law and Diplomacy, in the University of Oxford, has lately published some most able "Remarks on some late decisions respecting the Colonial Church," *i.e.* those of the Judicial Committee in the two cases of "Long *vs.* the Bishop of Capetown," and in the matter of the "Bishop of Natal," and in the case of "Bishop of Natal *vs.*, Gladstone and others, Trustees of the Colonial Bishopric's Fund." In the course of a most lucid and closely reasoned argument, the learned Professor proves, that in these Colonies where the Church is not established, and where the Crown possesses no power of legislation, (in matters ecclesiastical,) the Bishop has no legal status—no legal jurisdiction. He is as a Bishop, subject to no legal jurisdiction. He can, as a Bishop, express no legal authority or supremacy over others, nor is he subject to any. The Crown has no power to clothe him with a legal status. And all this follows from the fact, that in such Colonies the established Church forms no part of the Constitution.

"I am strongly persuaded," he says, in conclusion, "that whatever we may think or desire; whatever troubles or difficulties the Colonial Church may have to encounter in time to come; whatever theories may be spun, or expedients imagined, neither judgments of Courts nor acts of local legislatures, nor statutes of the Imperial Parliament, can establish or perpetuate in the Colonies an ecclesiastical supremacy of the Crown over a single denomination, and I should see with regret endeavours in this direction, which must, as I think in the long run multiply embarrassments, and only end in failure."

The Professor is not insensible to the dangers to which the Colonial Church—so situated—may at present be exposed; but he thinks such dangers have been greatly exaggerated, and that whatever they may be the remedy for them is not to be found in a Central Court of Law sitting in London.

The bond of union between the Mother Church of England and her daughters in the Colonies was by some thought to be the Royal Supremacy. This, as we see, has now utterly given way, and dangers of every description appear on every side, so long as we blindly trust to and grasp after it. Our true bond of union—that which has stood the test of experience—is that which rests on a common faith. It held the primitive churches together against the fierce strokes of heathen persecution. It was proved sufficient to hold together and draw constantly closer together the Churches of England and the Churches in Scotland and America, and this under far greater disadvantages than any which now beset the Church of England and her daughters in the Colonies.

In patience let us possess our souls, and with faith and prayers seek a solution of the present difficulty in the approaching Pan-Anglican Council. May the Holy Spirit guide its deliberations.