

land 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 showing 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 convocations.

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 to 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 Packington in objecting to the plan of setting each Diocese separately to work to lay down a system for 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 dependence on the Divine aid, to maintain those benefits, and transmit them unimpaired to posterity.

Hence we deprecate all attempts to tamper with the Doctrine of the Church, or any of her formularies. We deprecate any tendency to add to or diminish the deposit of Faith committed to the United Church of England and Ireland as a Branch of the Church Catholic—or to narrow her terms of communion as laid down in her Book of Common Prayer and Articles, for the preservation of which, we desire to express our deep thankfulness, and it is our earnest wish that Provincial and Diocesan Convocations in the Colonies, may be restrained from meddling with, much less from altering such high and weighty matters, and that they be confined to discipline and the temporalities of the Church, and such regulations of order and arrangement as may tend to her efficiency and extension.

The Constitution having secured the acknowledgment of the Royal Supremacy—the Unity and sound teaching of the Colonial Church in all things essential, and her identity as an integral part of the Church of England might proceed.

1st. To restrict the Provincial or Diocesan Convocations of the Colonial Church from entertaining any proposition for any change of the articles, Doctrines, Liturgy or offices in the United Church of England and Ireland.

2nd. To provide for the enforcing of proper discipline—the method of proceeding upon complaint against any clergyman,—for immoral conduct,—insubordination,—habits and pursuits inconsistent with their sacred calling, neglect of duty, unsound doctrine, breaches of orders &c. &c. The sentence that may be imposed and in certain cases the right of appeal.

3rd. To provide for the appointment and removal by due authority, and after proper proceedings, of Bishops, Presbyters, and Deacons.

4th. To provide for dividing the Dioceses into Parishes with proper regulations in case of future subdivision, with a view to Church purposes only.

5th. To provide for the extension and

temporal interests of the Church,—by the members assessing themselves to raise Funds for building, repairing Churches, Parsonages, School Houses, for the support of the Clergy and School Masters, and the maintenance of Public Worship.

6th. To provide for the regulation of fees for marriages, baptisms and burials.

These and various other matters affecting the welfare of the Church would require to be taken up one by one and provided for—the design being to have certain things fixed by superior authority so as to be subject to no change by any legislation within the diocese.

I would more briefly recapitulate what appears to me desirable,

1st. That one Constitution be framed for the government of the Church in all the Colonies.

2nd. That the Constitution should provide 1. For the establishment in each Colonial Diocese, of an Assembly for managing so far as may be committed to it, the affairs of the Church.

2. For giving such assembly the most appropriate name.

3. For establishing how it shall be composed, as to the proportion of Clergy and Laity—what shall form a quorum—how questions are to be decided—what regulations as to times of session,—prorogation—adjournment &c.

4. Who shall preside—if the Bishop, shall he possess an absolute veto, or, one modified, or merely the casting vote.

5. Shall there be a power in the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Crown, to disallow, within a limited period, any law or regulation of the Convocation.

From a review of these principles and details, two or three good men could, I think, in a single week, suggest a system for them all—not such as would satisfy and please every one, because that is not to be hoped for, but such as persons of good judgment and good intentions and with some knowledge of Colonial feelings and prepossessions, would think reasonable and practicable.

In regard to Sir John Packington's well grounded fear of diversity of regulations in different Colonies it must be carefully provided against, since that would evidently be the effect of leaving a wide scope to Colonial Convocations or Synods, and I should much rather prefer that an Imperial Statute should lay down the system as regarded cardinal points, leaving minor points to be the subject of regulation within the Colony respecting which some diversity of system would not signify.

The great use and importance of the governing body would rather consist in their being called on to execute the powers delegated to them by the Statute. I mean in their application of them to individual cases, as they arise and which it would be their part to dispose of, not according to any system of action devised by themselves, but in the manner prescribed by the Imperial Statute.

THE RIGHT HON. W. GLADSTONE'S BILLS.

The Bill as at first framed, appears open to several of the objections urged against it, and such require to be removed or satisfactorily modified.

This has in some measure been done in the Amended Bill, but further alterations and amendments may with propriety be suggested.

Whether by the law as it now stands, the Bishop with the Clergy and Laity of his Diocese in a British Colony can legally assemble of their own accord and make regulations for the management of their internal ecclesiastical affairs to the extent contemplated in the Amended Bill is a point which ought not to be treated as doubtful, unless it really be so.

Surely the status of the Church of England throughout the Colonial possessions of the Empire is a matter about which we can hardly suppose that there had been no opinion or intention in all times past on the part of the Parliament and Government of England.

Would it not therefore be safe to assume that the Bishop, Clergy and Laity had not authority of themselves to lay down a system of self-government without the sanction of Parliament, or of the Crown—and if this be so, it can hardly be right and certainly not politic to recite that it was doubtful, whether they could or could not do so; because it might be that Parliament would not pass this proposed Bill, or concur in any act upon the subject, and then the admission that it was doubtful whether the power does not already exist might afford a strong argument in the Colonies for assuming an authority that might not be very discreetly exercised.

It would have been better in my humble opinion to have commenced by reciting, "That it was expedient to enable &c."—saying nothing about doubts.

I venture to remark that the introduction

of such a Bill should be preceded by some preliminary notice, either on the part of the Government or of the proper Ecclesiastical authority in England,—it being desirable that Church affairs in the Colonies should be governed according to some uniform and well defined system prevailing throughout.

THE AMENDED BILL.

(TITLE.)

It should not be entitled an act to explain and amend the Laws relating to the Church in the Colonies,—but "an act for the better Government of the Church in the Colonies."

PREAMBLE.

Neither the Title nor preamble explain anything—the latter expresses doubts, and then proceeds not to explain them but to make positive provisions or Enactments. It does not propose to amend any particular Laws, but introduces for the first time a system for regulating certain matters which before had not been subjected to any regulation. How much better to commence by reciting "That it was expedient to enable the Bishop of any Diocese in the Colonies with his Clergy and Laity to meet together from time to time in Synods or Convocations &c."

Should not the words "Ecclesiastical affairs" be defined—what is understood by Ecclesiastical affairs—has the expression a reference to doctrine, or the form of prayer—or the ceremonial of public worship—all these are Ecclesiastical affairs. It is not easy to foresee to what subjects and objects such Synods or convocations might not attempt to apply themselves as coming within the construction of the words Ecclesiastical affairs. Some Convocations might understand that there are limits to their power of regulation and management, which limits other Convocations might not acknowledge.

FIRST CLAUSE.

1st Clause, instead of being a mere negative provision that no Laws shall be construed to prevent, &c., should, I think, in a natural and plain manner authorise that to be done which it is intended should be done.

"Being declared bonâ fide Members of the Church" seems not an accurate form of expression—for being disjunctive either of the requisites must be taken to be sufficient. What is a declared member of the Church? Must any one be received as a Member of the Church who declares himself to be such—though he may never have attended one of her places of worship or joined in her service up to the moment that he declares himself a Member, and claims upon that declaration to have a vote in her Convocation. "Being regular communicants" better, that is, according to the 21st Canon, every person Communicating thrice a year a Canonical Test not unreasonable for those admitted to legislate for the Church.

A bonâ fide Member of the Church is not so definite as it appears to be—who is to pronounce upon two bonâ fides? And what shall be the criterion? Moreover this first clause makes no provision for calling the first meeting. When and how—or by whom, nor by any means clearly who are to meet or who is to preside.

What does "by common consent" mean? If there is no dissentient voice, there would be common consent—but if all the Clergy vote one way or a majority of them, and all the Laity or a majority of them the other way, which opinion shall prevail for the better conduct of their Ecclesiastical affairs. The union of Dioceses should only be permitted under a Metropolitan, and include all under his jurisdiction.

The last three lines of the first clause, "subject always as at this time in common with all other Religious Communions, to the authority of the Local Legislatures respectively, and to such Provisions as they may think proper to enact" are intended perhaps to meet Sir John Packington's objections as tending to make the Church dominant to a greater degree than it has been hitherto—by giving to the regulations of the Colonial Synods an authority supported by Parliament and so beyond the control of Colonial Legislation. Now, instead of these three lines it would be wiser, I think, to guard against any supposition that such dominancy was intended, by inserting in the middle of the clause some such words as these:—Not repugnant to any Law passed or to be passed by the Parliament of the United Kingdom, or by the Legislature of the Colony within which such Dioceses are respectively situated.

2ND CLAUSE.

2nd Clause. As it is here assumed that regulations will be made for the trial of offending Clerks,—it appears desirable that the Bill should contain a definitive provision for the erection of a Court for the purpose of giving authority to the Bishops for suspension or deprivation of office on conviction of the offender.