

CANTERBURY SETTLEMENT.

The *Lyttelton Times* reports meetings at Christchurch and Lyttelton in February, upon the subject of Colonial Church government. Both meetings were called and presided over by the Rev. O. Matthias, as Commissary of the Bishop of New Zealand. The following are the resolutions proposed and variations suggested by the Ecclesiastical Committee of Christchurch:—

General Principles proposed by the Bishops (as the Basis of a Constitution for the Church in New Zealand).

1. That the Bishops, clergy, and laity, shall be three distinct orders, the content of all of which shall be necessary to all acts of binding upon the diocese at all of which shall be necessary.
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vary on all acts binding upon the Church at large.

2. Subject to the foregoing principle, that each order be made at liberty to conduct its life and labors separately, or to a declaration that be is a unit with the others, at its own discretion.

3. That every adult male member of the Church of England, and of no other

3. That provisionally, till a definition of Church membership shall have been agreed upon by a general convention, every person shall be deemed a member of the Church of England who shall make a written declaration to that effect to the clergyman of his parish or district

4. That every adult Church member who shall have been duly registered, be entitled to vote at the election of lay representatives at the first General Convention.

6. That it shall rest with the General Convention to decide how and by whom all patronage shall be exercised, and in what manner all persons holding Church offices shall be removable from the same, and also to fix the amount of all salaries, fees, and other allowances.

& That it is necessary that the Church body, constituted as above, should be legally incorporated; and that all sites of churches, burial grounds, schools, and lands for the endowment of the Church, &c., should be vested in the general incorporation.

7. That, in order to maintain the Queen's supremacy and union with the Mother Church, a draft of the constitution proposed for the Church of New Zealand be submitted to her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Colonies, and to the Archbishop of Canterbury, for their consideration.

7 That measures be taken to maintain and preserve to the utmost union with the Mother Church, due regard being had to the independent action of the Colonial Church.

to secure to our branch of the English Church the liberty, trines of the Church of England within certain limits, of trans-gland, nor the authorised ing laws for its own govern-ment. version of the Bible, shall in any way be subject to the

3. That neither the doctrine of the Church; but we are of opinion that, to meet the exigencies of the Church in the Colonies, the power of alteration and adapting the ritual should reside within her General Convention.

2. That the Bishop of New Zealand be requested to embody the above resolutions in the form of a petition, and to take such steps as may be necessary for carrying into effect the wishes of the memorialists.

These resolutions and suggestions were discussed at a meeting at Christchurch on the 6th of February.

"His Honour the Superintendent (Mr. Fitzgerald,) rose to move the adoption of the first three paragraphs. We had no longer any need to dwell on the fact that there is a call for some sort of Church constitution for the colonies. All were demanding power for the Church to manage her own affairs. It should be distinctly understood that in talking of giving power to the Church, we mean only the removal of disabilities; the power not to interfere with others, but simply to regulate her own affairs. In proposing the three first paragraphs of the suggested basis of a constitution for the Church, he thought that they would all agree that the governing body of the Church should be composed of Bishops, clergy, and laity. With regard to the alteration of general, into diocesan convention, they appeared to have met with a difficulty of a kind analogous to that which had presented itself to the Imperial Parliament in framing the Constitution for New Zealand, when they divided this colony into six provinces, and also instituted a General Assembly. There were objects such as those alluded to by Mr. Jacobs

relating to property, which would most properly be left to the government of each diocese: whilst, on the other hand, there were questions relating to doctrine and articles of faith, which can rest only on a much wider foundation or concurrence of representatives of large bodies of Christians such as would be a general council of the Australasian colonies. But such a Synod would meet but rarely, it would form a wholly unfit body to discuss questions of daily occurrence relating to property and appointment to offices, &c. In regard to the third paragraph, though he would propose it in the words placed in his hands, he wished to express his own opinion, as he did not concur in the necessity of electors signing a declaration that they were members of the Church of England. He was convinced that the trust and wisest policy of the Church, unless we had some distinct heresies to oppose, was to adopt no narrow test of Church membership, but to consider, as in Apostolic times, every one to be a Churchman who would partake of the Sacrament and acknowledge the Creeds of the Church. Beyond this, to require any declaration of Church membership was to narrow the basis of the Church. With this expression of his own difference of opinion on this point, he would propose the three paragraphs as altered by the Church committee.

"The motion was seconded by Mr. Prichard.

"Mr. Britton wished to explain that this paragraph as now proposed did not represent the unanimous view of the Church committee as regards the communicant test for electors of lay representatives, and on this point he felt compelled to move an amendment. Some weak brethren whose consciences we were bound to respect, would, he thought, object to becoming registered communicants in order to obtain the franchise. He would move as a amendment to leave out the word 'communicants' in the first line.

" Mr. Martin seconded the amendment.

"Mr. Hall had heard no reason offered why the Communion test was wrong in principle. Mr. Brittan's argument rested only on expediency, but there appeared to him a higher principle involved when we were considering how to secure those to manage the affairs of the Church who should be really heartily well affected, and he thought that whether electors or elected, they should be communicants. His test might not be sufficient of itself, neither is a declaration standing alone, but the two combined would form the very best test which could be desired. Three out of four people you meet will say off-hand that they belong to the Church of England, and in times of excitement elections would, without a proper test, be carried by those who were not honest and sincere Churchmen.

"His Honor, in reply, observed that though we had no power at present to form a constitution, we must act and speak as if we had, and he would declare that he had not the slightest respect for the Church of England as a limb of the State, but only as far as she is a part of the Church of Christ. We should do away with all differences between a Christian and a heathen if we were at liberty to discard one by one all the essentials of a Church. If by giving way to wrong feelings under the idea of conciliating weak brethren, we may cut off one of the sacraments of the Church from our definition of a Churchman, we may discard everything else. Let us adopt the widest basis known to Christianity, the partaking of the same sacraments and the same creeds. The first three clauses into which the fourth was incorporated, as proposed by the Church committee, were then carried by a show of hands.

"The Rev. Dr. Mackie moved the 5th and 6th paragraphs.

"His Honour wished to express his sense of the wisdom of the arrangement in England by which Church property was vested in a number of different corporations, not in all Diocesan Synods, nor in the body of Church trustees, but where every parish was a separate corporation, Church property being vested in Deans and Chapters, in colleges, and so on. Thus in times of excitement or revolutionary violence, though it would be easy to despoil a single body, it was very difficult to subvert so many various bodies all interested in the preservation of Church funds. He would therefore move that in clause G, the words 'or other' be inserted after 'parochial.' The fifth and sixth paragraphs were then carried, with the addition proposed by his Honour.

"Mr. Hall, in proposing the 7th paragraph, would not enter into the subject of the Queen's Supremacy, on which he thought people often had very confused notions; it rests on statute law, and could not be affected by any act of ours.

"The Rev. H. Jacobs could see no reason for sub-

mitting our Church regulations to the Secretary of
 State for the Colonies. It would be far better that
 the Church of New Zealand should be content to let
 any voluntary regulations, into which her members
 may enter, prevail by their own force. Should a
 Provincial Synod of the Australasian Church be assem-
 bled, we should indeed desire the sanction of such a
 body, and still more should we like to see a grand
 council of the Anglican communion throughout the
 world, with the Archbishop of Canterbury as Patriarch
 and Primate. He believed that union with the mother
 Church must be based on agreement with her in es-
 sentials; on the Creeds and Sacraments, on Apostolic
 doctrine and order, on the use of a common version of
 the Scriptures, and a common Liturgy, not on the
 mere accidents of temporal government. Would any
 one maintain that what is called the Royal supremacy
 is an essential doctrine of the Church? Is it a doc-
 trine of Scripture? It would be hard to prove it. Is
 it of the essence of the universal Church? Then
 where was the Church before the time of Constantine?
 Is it of the essence of the Reformed Church of En-
 gland? What, then, has become of the Church in
 America since their separation from England? And
 what would become of the Church of England herself,
 should her government ever cease to be monarchical?
 The doctrine of the Royal supremacy may have suited
 an age when the divine right of kings was an article
 of belief, but is wholly out of place when the empire is
 virtually ruled by a majority of the House of Com-
 mons, composed of men of all religions, and especially
 inapplicable to the unwedded, unestablished, unrein-
 forced Church in these colonies. The Royal Supremacy
 is a sort of lay papacy which cramps the Church of
 England, and stands in the way of a complete union
 of the Anglican Churches throughout the world. The
 time must speedily come when the oaths and obliga-
 tions which bind our Bishops and Clergy will be re-
 vided, as they would have been long since but for the im-
 pension of the powers of Convocation. Mr. Hall has
 told us what these oaths chiefly are; surely anything
 so antiquated and obsolete as those are in the present
 day must speedily be abolished. They were indeed
 felt by some to be so inconsistent with facts that they
 had even been a bar to some excellent men taking or-
 ders in our church.

"The seventh paragraph, as proposed, was then carried.

"Mr. Bealey moved the 8th clause. It was evident that the fundamental doctrines of the Church, and the authorised version of the Scriptures, could not be in any way subject to the decision of any colonial Church. So suspicious was our own Church of any doctrine propounded by any less authority than that of the whole Church, that she allows no doctrine to be essential which has not been sanctioned by one of the four first general Councils. With regard to the adaptation of the Liturgy to the particular circumstances of a Colonial Church, the matter stood on a different ground, and a Diocesan Synod might properly sanction such adaptations.

"Mr. Brittan moved as an amendment that clause eight stand as in the Bishop's draft, which was seconded by the Rev. W. Mackie.

4 Mr. Hall proposed another amendment, explaining more fully the purpose of those who would vary the clause so as to allow a power to the Synod of the Diocese to adapt the Liturgy to any peculiar exigence which might arise in a colony, either as regarded the natives or the nature of occasional services at stations &c., instead of leaving this to be done irregularly by individual clergymen, as at present

"After further discussion, Mr. Brittan's amendment was carried—the paragraph being allowed to stand in the original draft.

"An additional paragraph referring to the decisions in Parliament on the Colonial Church Bill having been proposed by Sir T. Tancred, and subsequently withdrawn, the business of the meeting terminated after a vote of thanks to the chairman, by his proposing the blessing."

On the following evening a public meeting of members of the Church of England was held in the school room at Lyttelton, to take into consideration the same subject. The Rev. G. Matthias presided, as at Christchurch. At this meeting the Bishop's plan appeared to have been adopted bodily; an amendment to discuss the resolutions *separately* having been put and be-

" That in the opinion of this meeting there should be in each diocese a separately-constituted committee, in whom shall be vested, and by whom shall be administered, the Church revenues of such diocese."