

before so important a step is taken, and if the difficulties and apparent objections which present themselves to the thoughtful and far-seeing minds are stated and enforced to the utmost.

The step is in itself a most grave one. It is the creation of a centre for a new Church, free from many of those restraints of law and public opinion, which control the Bishops who, within Her Majesty's dominions, exercise their authority over our own countrymen. Moreover, it is an act of the highest authorities of the Church, and, in a degree, it commits the Church itself. In this respect it differs from most of the tentative measures which have been undertaken for extending the usefulness and bringing out the powers and energy of our Church. These have been the acts of individual clergymen: with them has lain the responsibility; our Spiritual Fathers may have encouraged, or simply not prevented them: if the schemes failed, their failure involved those only who were engaged in them; if they succeeded, they might then receive the approval and sanction of the Bishops. Hence we view with satisfaction the appointment of a committee of the Upper House of Convocation to consider the subject of Missionary Bishops. The responsibility of the act of consecration rests with the Bishops, and with them should rest the decision.

It is under the sense of the importance of having the subject thoroughly sifted that we have freely allowed the objections to the scheme to be broached in the *Colonial Church Chronicle*, and we would as freely continue the consideration of the subject in the spirit of impartial inquiry.

The leading objections which are made appear really to lie against the consecration of any Bishop who is to exercise his functions beyond the dominions of the Queen, and so beyond the reach of our ordinary English law. These objections are presented under three aspects. First, the need of the Royal mandate for the consecration of a Bishop; secondly, the difficulties which would arise in case of the Bishop thus consecrated offending in conduct, or being guilty of heretical teaching or other irregularity; thirdly, the status of the Clergy ordained by him, should they seek to officiate or hold preferment in England.

Now, before considering the weight of these objections, it would be well to see clearly how far they extend, and what consequences must result from admitting them as decisive against the proposed measure.

The objections are at present made to the consecration of Bishops who are to conduct missions in countries as yet heathen, and they are combined with other objections which apply exclusively to such Bishops, as, for instance, that the mission may fail, that Bishops are not wanted for the first work of conversion, and the like. And thus they are alleged by those who profess that they would gladly see Bishops consecrated after the work of conversion had made progress, and when there was a reasonable prospect of the new Christians becoming a settled and permanent Church.

But, in fact, it appears that they hold equally against the consecration of a Bishop for the most flourishing and successful mission, provided it be eternal to the Queen's dominions.

Let Presbyters go forth to the rich harvest-fields of Africa—let their labours be blessed with results ever so glorious, let there be a need of more and more clergy, let there be a laity so fit for ordination—let there be ever so great and manifest need of a Bishop, yet still the English dominion has no place, no foothold, be it ever so imaginary—no Labaun, or Victoria, (Hongkong,) or Gibraltar, or Sierra Leone. The Queen's mandate cannot be given for the consecration without aggression, and a Bishop, if consecrated will be free from the operation of our laws.

There is no difference whatever between the two cases, so far as the objection in question goes.

And what is the logical result? Why this. The Bishops of the Church of England—nay, the Church of England itself—is restrained from fulfilling the last great command of our Lord, and cannot propagate the Church beyond the limits of the English dominions. Every other body of religionists is free. We are free, so far as preaching the Gospel goes, and sending out Priests to teach and minister the Sacraments, but we cannot send Bishops to confirm and to ordain Clergy,—to give the new society the power of continuous life. We cannot create fresh Churches, we cannot put out effects which shall themselves grow and form repetitions of the parent plant. We have come to the birth, and have not strength to bring forth.

Do those who bring forward these objections consider this? Are they willing to admit that we have not within us the powers of reproduction—that our Episcopacy is a *peculium* designed for British subjects, and which, like some special luxury, we jealously guard for our own use? We see no alternative but this, if these objections are allowed to be weight against the consecration of Bishops to lead missions.

Of their intrinsic value it would seem enough to say that the first can only be a matter of form; and if the law at present stands in the way, it is a law which may easily be altered. The second derives all its force from the circumstance that the Church of England has found so strong and convenient a friend in the State, that she has allowed her own powers of jurisdiction and government to fall into abeyance. But surely it is not to be supposed that rules of some degree of efficacy may not be made to regulate the relations of such new Bishops to those already existing, and to provide against abuses of their power. It does not follow because the committee of the Lower House of Convocation has been cautious in suggesting special means for securing the ends in view, that no such means can be devised.

We seem to be too distrustful of the inherent power and influence that resides in the Church, and perhaps too timid as to the results of greater freedom. Yet we must anticipate the time when greater freedom must of necessity be allowed, if our Church is to be made the means of propagating the Gospel; inasmuch as varying climates, races, and circumstances will call imperatively for modifications and developments of our arrangements, to say nothing of what may be required among ourselves ere the rising generation grows old.

As to the status of the Clergy ordained by the mission Bishops, it is a question to be settled by lawyers; but, whether they be in the condition of the American or Scottish Clergy, or in that of Clergy ordained for the colonies, or in the freer condition of Clergy ordained by Roman Catholic Bishops and afterwards conforming, we apprehend the difficulty is unimportant, as it would be easy for missionaries going from England or the colonies to be ordained by other Bishops. The Clergy ordained by the missionary Bishops would either be their native converts, or those Christians who had given themselves up to live and die in the mission. But it is a question which must be settled, when our colonies become independent, or heathens eternal to British rule become Christians according to the Apostolic pattern of our Church.

We have become so accustomed to our own established routine, our settled forms and methods, that we feel timorous at the thought of the principles we hold being developed in any other shape than, that in which we have been accustomed to

see them. We shrink from falling back on the inherent powers of the Church. Surely, Councils, and Canons, and Ecclesiastical censures would be much more effectual means of regulating Churches in the interior of Africa than Acts of Uniformity and Clergy Discipline Bills. The time is necessarily coming on when the true strength of the Church will be shown, and her internal resources for meeting the varying needs of her position will be manifested. This makes it desirable that if our missions prosper the number of Bishops should be increased, in order that they may act together in Councils and in the consecration of other Bishops. The great number of Bishops in the Primitive Church may well be thought of by us in this connexion. It is true there may be divisions, and mutual excommunications, and heresies arising, which are repressed by a dead weight at home; but surely no student of antiquity would be startled or offended at such results as these. Indeed, the difficulties and dangers of these rising Churches would be just parallel to those of the unestablished Churches of the first three centuries, or of those which planted themselves among the barbarians of the North. We can understand the objection being made by Erastians, who would gladly have it thought that the Church could not exist without the State, but we cannot understand its being made by any who profess a respect for Primitive Antiquity.

But it is said, "What will be the consequences if the missions fail? It will be most humiliating for the Bishop to return without having effected his work, and he himself will be in a useless position." On the latter difficulty it may be considered that we have now nearly forty Colonial Bishops. At present, owing to the recent creation of the seas, the occupants of the great proportion of them are comparatively young men; but it will not always be so, and allowing that each Bishop on an average holds his see for thirty years—say from forty years of age to seventy—we shall need (without taking now sees into account) four new Colonial Bishops every three years. It does not, therefore, seem likely that the unsuccessful missionary Bishops need remain long unemployed, and probably the experience—they have had, and the habits of application acquired to be in learning the language of the heathen (supposing the language acquired to be in itself of no use), will be no bad preparations for a new Episcopate.

For the humiliation we may be supposed to feel at the failure of missionary work, is it really so great as what we ought to feel in the daily failure of our work at home? It is more humiliating to us that we prove unable to persuade strangers to believe in our religion and submit to its rules, than that we do not induce our own countrymen, children of professed Christian parents and themselves professed Christians, to be Christians indeed? Is the failure of a mission to the tribes of Africa more humiliating than the failure, or very partial success, or the non-attempting of missions among the dense masses of practical heathenism which crowd our own cities?

As to the failure of the subscriptions by which the Bishops and their Clergy are to be supported, or the relation of dependence in which they will be placed to those at home who contribute to their maintenance, we would only observe, that those English Christians who wish for missionary Bishops do so because they believe in the Divine origin and authority of the Episcopate, and would desire above all things to leave the Bishops free. And suppose their contributions did fail—are we to have confidence in the promises of God, nor in the blessedness of the Apostolic condition, "as poor, yet making many rich?"