

him a little beyond the bounds of prudence when he demanded an instantaneous answer to the very serious questions put by the Bishop of Capetown and the Dean of Maritzburg. Private deliberation and careful inquiry ought to precede and prepare for the important business of framing such a reply, if indeed it be possible, so far as the Dean's queries are concerned, in the present stage of the controversy to reply at all. The members of Convocation may say, indeed, that they are resolved not to admit Bishop Colenso to their pulpits, and that they will hold no communication with him as a Colonial Diocesan on ecclesiastical matters; and such a declaration on the part of the Bishops and clergy of the Province of Canterbury would, in effect, be to disavow and condemn him before the whole Church. It might not be so easy to give a pledge that he should not be admitted to communion at any English altar, nor perhaps in some respects so desirable. At all events, the difficulties which attend such a pledge, and the consequences that may flow from its adoption, ought to be very well considered before the Convocation of Canterbury is committed to it. Let us support the Bishop of Capetown by all means that are consistent with our own position and duties; but do not let us, in our eagerness to do so, forget the wide difference between our responsibilities in England and those of a Bishop in a Colonial See. Before the next sitting of Convocation, the Bishops may see their way to the adoption of the right course: if they do, there is little fear but that the Lower House will heartily support them in adopting and maintaining it to the end. Meantime the Propagation Society is free to act without running the risks which beset the more authoritative action of Convocation; the Committee of that Society will, no doubt, take care that the cause of the wronged and suffering Churchmen of Natal is not betrayed.

Turning from these debated and debatable questions to those on which all are agreed, we have to notice the step that was gained during the late Session of Convocation in the movement for the extension of the Episcopate at home. For the first time the Bishops with evident sincerity and earnestness united in declaring the need they had themselves experienced of some addition to their own body. Others have long since observed that Episcopal functions in the larger dioceses were not, and could not be, adequately performed; we have now the one important testimony to that fact which seemed to be withheld. The touching words in which the Bishop of St. David's described his own anticipation of the infirmities which, at no distant day, may diminish his power of pastoral usefulness, found an echo from almost every Episcopal voice. The Bishop of London's absence, occasioned by serious illness, spoke plainly of the discomfiture of the over-confident hope he once expressed of being able singly to do the vast work attendant on the spiritual oversight of the metropolis; while not even the youngest members of the Upper House were sanguine enough to contradict the experience of their elders in the Episcopal order. If the moderate addition of the three bishoprics now asked for should be refused, the authorities who refuse it will be wholly responsible for the disaffection which a keen sense of wrong will assuredly arouse in a considerable portion of the Church of England.

The question of Suffragans, too, has advanced by the consentaneous action of the two Houses. In this respect the otherwise most valuable Report of the Cathedral Commissioners stands corrected by subsequent experience. The frequent employment of Colonial Bishops in the diocese of Exeter and elsewhere has shown that administrations of the rite of Confirmation, and some other Episcopal functions, might be very largely multiplied by the creation of Suffragan Bishops without any of the evil consequences once predicted as likely to arise from such a course. The