

CONVOCATION.

EACH succeeding Session of Convocation throws some fresh light on the nature of its powers, and the conditions on which its usefulness to the Church depends. More and more clearly it appears that the separate existence of two Provincial Conventions is almost fatal to any prospect of their employment in the work of legislation. That the Royal Assent should ever be given to diverse canons for the northern and southern parts of England, except in matters (if such there be) of exclusively local interest, is inconceivable. In the case of Ireland and Scotland we are familiar with instances of separate national legislation on a multitude of subjects: nor is there any good reason why English and Irish Conventions should be fused, or why the canons they might respectively pass should be in all points alike. With Canterbury and York it is different: the practical inconvenience of an operative system of ecclesiastical canons for the dioceses on one side of the Trent, which should have no force on the other, would be too evident for any Minister of the Crown to encounter, and too serious for public opinion to tolerate. The revision of existing canons, recommended by Mr. Bramston in a speech which met with just and general favor on the last day of the late Session, has this obvious difficulty in its way. Mr. Bramston, it is true, has only moved for a committee of inquiry; and its proceedings must in their nature be purely tentative: but it is well to remember that nothing short of absolute agreement in the matter between the two Conventions can give any chance of bringing the question of revision in a practical shape before the Ministers of the Crown.

In those more numerous questions on which Convocation is not required to legislate, but only to give the weight of its advice and authority, though identical expressions of opinion cannot always be looked for, some concurrence of deliberations between the North and the South is nevertheless to be desired. If Acts of Parliament touching Dilapidations, Banns of Marriage, and other practical questions, are to be obtained from the Legislature, there must be no mistake as to the consent of the clergy in their Conventions to the schemes proposed. Parliament itself can only legislate in the direction in which public opinion is believed to incline: and, if it is guided at all, as it certainly ought to be in matters ecclesiastical, by Synodical resolutions, the resolutions passed at York and Westminster must agree in the guidance they supply. A notice of motion has been given by Sir Henry Thompson on the subject of uniting the two Conventions, which may afford an opportunity for discussing the whole subject; although his plan of including the Irish Church within the scope of the proposed inquiry does not increase the chances of obtaining a practical result.

Many subjects, however, remain—and those of deep interest—on which either Convocation may fitly give, and, indeed, is bound to give, its separate and independent judgment. Of these none is more important than that of the relations between the Church at home and her Colonial branches. They were brought into discussion in both Houses at their late meeting. The Upper House had to answer the questions from Churchmen at Natal; the Lower House endeavored to deal with the request for a General Anglican Synod, made by the Bishops, clergy and laity of the Canadian Church. In both cases a sense of the gravity of the issues raised seemed to forbid a hasty decision. For though the English clergy are almost unanimous in disapproving Bishop Colenso's teaching, and quite unanimous in desiring cordial intercommunion with their Canadian brethren, the best methods of giving effect to these feelings are not so easily ascertained. The Bishop of Oxford's zeal carried