

THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE CHURCH.

THE PRACTICAL EFFECTS WHICH MAY BE EXPECTED TO ARISE FROM THE CONSOLIDATION OF THE CHURCH IN CANADA.

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(CONTINUED.)

Another advantage which it seems to me may fairly be expected to flow from Consolidation is the new power the Church will gain of expressing her views and making her influence tell in regard to great moral and social questions of which, as the champion of that righteousness and justice which exalt a nation she is bound to take notice. Let me give one illustration of what I mean. We boast ourselves as Canadians upon our own elaborate system of education; we point with, perhaps, pardonable pride to the large sums which as a nation we lavish on it; we recite with satisfaction the increasing number of 'isms' and 'ologies' which we cram into the heads of our long-suffering children. And yet I say that in spite of all this, the work of education in Canada is only being half done. The intellectual side is being fed to repletion, and the moral side is being starved. And yet, it is the veriest common-place of all history to say that in the permanent power and prosperity of a people, the moral training of the citizen is worth three times what the intellectual is. I am not giving only my own opinion; I am voicing views recently expressed by such a broad and thoughtful paper as the *Toronto Week*, "when I say that in Canada as a whole genuine, thorough, moral training of the children is only being played with—it does not take up one tenth part of the teaching time; there are no text books on it; there are no examinations in it; there is no government inspection of it. And so it is largely allowed to drift, pushed out of the way by the more clamorous calls of intellectual training. And I further say that this state of things is the greatest possible menace to the well-being of our nation; that we are sowing the wind and that if we go on, we shall surely reap the whirlwind in a lowered tone of public morals, a degenerating standard of private conduct and a general loosening of moral ties, which will ruin the best interests of the nation. How is this state of things to cease, for cease it must if Canada is to endure and prosper. It is an intolerable wrong that our children should have their best interests consumed in the Moloch fires of political expediency. How is it to cease; why, the Christian Church as a whole must rouse itself, unite and speak, aye, and act on this profoundly, this vitally important subject. And no part of the Christian Church of the Dominion is better fitted to speak or act upon this subject than the Church of England, for her clergy are almost a unit over the Dominion on this question; but being so far not one Church but three she lacked opportunity to speak with united voice. Now it is different. A committee representing the whole Church can co-operate with other Christian bodies to inaugurate a new movement over the whole Dominion to put a stop to a state of things in our system of education which is a shame to a Christian nation, and a blot upon our Anglo-Saxon civilisation. We must demand, not the teaching of religion, but the teaching of morality as based upon the will and word of God. We must have the ten commandments taught to our children from ocean to ocean of our Dominion, and taught not in any slipshod, half-hearted way, but taught thoroughly, earnestly, fully, made as integral and essential a part of our public school courses as are reading, writing or arithmetic. In this and other ways

a united church can influence for good public thought and deed as no individual dioceses or even provinces ever can.

Again, I think we may look for a large access of new corporate life and power from the union which we are considering to night. We talk of and pray for Christian reunion, and signs are not wanting in many quarters that things are shaping themselves in that direction; but if the Church of England in Canada is to play the part she ought in that great movement, she must first herself become unit of organic life and force. With united Presbyterianism, with united Methodism all over the Dominion one first condition for the Church taking any part at all in efforts towards union would seem certainly to be that she should be able to speak with the authority of a single united Church on the great question which must be discussed and settled ere the dream of many devout souls can be turned into an achieved and beneficent reality. But besides organic unity, Consolidation will help to produce that real inner unity of sentiment which the Church of England must have if she is ever to play her part aright in the development of the religious life of our great Dominion. This aspect of Consolidation was well brought out in one of the first meetings ever held on the subject, when speaking in London, Ontario, Mr. Charles Jenkins, of Petrolia, said: "They had arrived at a period in the history of the local Church when to exist they must extend their machinery. No one could hear the addresses of Canon D

and the Bishop of Algoma last night without concluding that there is a temporary blight on the life of the Canadian Church, that her power is paralyzed. It is this chilling isolation that has done it, and unless we break free from it the Canadian Church will never occupy the place she should, either at home or in the missionary field. The Church in England had accomplished a noble work; it had permeated through every class of English society, moulding the character of the nation; and its influence had much to do with the holding up of that glorious flag which was known and respected wherever man had found a home on earth. This was the work of the Church and the Prayer Book in the Mother country; but here in Canada the Church had accomplished nothing of that kind. Why? because here there was no cohesion; no Catholic sentiment discernible. I'm of Toronto says one; I of Huron, says another; I of Niagara, says yet another, and so it goes on. It was the duty of the Church to correct this; to weld the people together into one organic living whole." And that Mr. Jenkins was right the whole history of the Church since then has amply proved. But how will Consolidation produce unity of sentiment, which is the real vital unity that will alone give organic unity its full value and effect. It will I think tend to break down the sources of disunion which have been hitherto a cause of uneasiness to the Canadian Church, viz, *Sectionalism* and *party spirit*. In regard to the first of these I think that we may fairly hope that when Churchmen from all over the Dominion meet each other in General Synod or Committee: when they learn more and more of each other and of the needs, the difficulties and the special problems of each Section of our widely sundered and divided work; when they look about beyond the barriers of Diocesan and Provincial organizations and interests and are called upon to survey the work and provide for the progress of the whole Canadian Church, I do think that there will thus ensue a breaking down of sectional divisions, a removal of sectional isolation and a clearing up of sectional misunderstandings which could never have come to pass with a still divided Church. And I think the same beneficent results may be looked for in regard to the second cause of disunion, viz, *party spirit*. I am not so Utopian as to dream that parties are going to cease in the Church;

we've got to make human nature over again before that happens; but I do think that it is possible for these parties so to hold their views, so to respect the feelings, principles and rights of those who differ from them; so to subordinate the interests of the party to the interests of the Church that the bane of party spirit shall at least be minimized, if not utterly destroyed; our own Diocese is a proof of this; both parties are fully represented in the ranks of our Clergy and laity; and yet one source of our progress has undoubtedly been that party bitterness has almost been unknown among us. We are a united Diocese, as one man rallying around our Catholic hearted Bishop and presenting a united and therefore victorious front to the difficulties which meet us at well-nigh every step in our onward course. And what is possible in one Diocese is surely possible for the whole Church, and the large questions, the infinitely important issues which will engage the members of our General Synods, the calibre of men that these Synods will surely call out; the new spirit and enthusiasm for the Church as a whole that Consolidation will evoke, will surely have the effect of lessening the prevalence and weakening the influence of party spirit in every section of the Canadian Church. If we want an indication of this we have only to remember the course of events at the Winnipeg Conference and the General Synod last Fall. No more serious questions were ever debated than were frankly and fully discussed at these two gatherings. Men of every shade of view met on these occasions, and yet at both these meetings party spirit was conspicuous for its absence. Among all the votes taken and the divisions which took place, there was not a single trace of the influence of party lines, and partly because of this very fact the General Synod was so eminently successful as to elicit the hearty commendation even of the *Toronto Globe*.

A fourth advantage which we may hope to see arise out of Consolidation is the creation in some way of a common Widows and Orphans Fund and Superannuated Fund for our Clergy. There seem to be something distinctly hard in the fact that after a Minister has been paying regularly to a W. & O. Fund, or has been contributing through himself or his congregation to a Superannuation Fund for years, just because he moves to another Diocese, though he still continues an active Clergyman of the same Church, he should yet lose the advantage of long service or long support of the W. & O. Fund.

Now I am well aware that in any way to interfere with existing Funds will be very difficult; but I do not think it impossible that there should be created at least a Superannuation Fund, if not also a W. & O. Fund for the whole Dominion. Such a Fund would have to start from the beginning, but owing to its wider range and therefore, greater benefit, it would, I fancy, gain a good deal of support which is now withheld from Diocesan Funds by reason of the fact that in leaving a Diocese the Clergyman loses all participation in the Fund.

The views which I have put forward in this paper may seem to be visionary. I do not claim that these new forces will become immediately operative, far from it; but I think Consolidation provides two important factors for turning vision into reality—it provides an ideal towards which to work, and it provides an organization through which this ideal may be achieved. I am sure of this: if our fellow Churchmen in the East are as earnest in this matter as are we in the West, the next General Synod will see a very distinct advance along the lines I have suggested. We are in *dead earnest* about Consolidation here in the West. The western sections of General Synod committees have already held two meetings. One at Winnipeg in January and the other at Banff in June, both attended at a considerable expenditure of money,