

## 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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That the Consolidation of the Church in Canada may be *expected* to have practical results and those of the most important and far-reaching nature, is a truth that should go almost without saying. When we consider the nature of the movement from which this Consolidation sprang; when we remember the careful steps which led up to it; when we recall the names and character of the men who have taken part in it; when we pass in review the debates and discussions which have taken place in such Bodies as the Provincial Synods of Canada and Rupert's Land, the various Diocesan Synods in Eastern Canada, the Winnipeg Conference, and the General Synod; debates and discussions which were confessedly the ablest, the most weighty, and at the same time the most harmonious ever held in the history of the Canadian Church; when we gratefully recollect the high enthusiasm, the deep earnestness and the wide spread unanimity which characterized the proceedings of the General Synod last fall, surely we may well conclude that the great Head of the Church does not mean that all this zeal and effort shall evaporate in useless sentiment and profitless organization.

Granted then that *some* definite and important results may be looked for, our main question now fronts us, "What is to be the *nature* of these results?" Along just what lines may we reasonably hope that the Consolidation of our Church will influence for good the life and work of the Church of England in Canada?"

And first, in the very forefront of the fruits which we may reasonably hope to gather from Consolidation, I place the new impetus, which we trust will thus be given to the *missionary work* of the Canadian Church. Here, I believe, lies the *crucial point* of the whole question of the practical benefits of Consolidation. If it fail here, other benefits will be comparatively valueless; if it succeed here, it will amply justify itself even if no other advantage should accrue from it. For let us clearly understand this; the Church that is not a missionary Church is a *dying* Church. The whole story of the past is either misread or unread by us if we have not learned this. It is at its deadliest peril that the Church in any parish or diocese turns a deaf ear to the Master's mandate, and so engages itself with its own interests or its own difficulties as to have no attention or no aid to give to the work of carrying forward the banners of the Cross to new fields of enterprise. We have heard of dioceses being urged to curtail their expenditure on missionary ventures in order to minister more fully to their own needs; and I say that, though such methods may afford a temporary relief, they do so at a tremendous cost, for by just so much they wither up the spiritual life of their people, they harden their heart by the encouragement of selfishness and sectionalism, they choke the flowing springs of Christian beneficence, and they tend to dry up those fountains of liberality from which the diocese itself must look to draw its life. Now, in this matter of missionary progress the Canadian Church needs a new Pentecost to wake in it a genuine missionary spirit. I do not wish to speak slightly of what has been done in the past. I remember with gratitude the cordial welcome which I myself received in many quarters in the East and which has since been continued to Mr. Rogers; I desire to speak thankfully of the noble work which has been done by the W.A.M.A.; I do not wish in any way to ignore or undervalue the work of the

B.D. and F.M., and yet, after making all these allowances and acknowledgments, I say that, compared to what it ought to have done, compared to what others have done, the Canadian Church as a whole has, so far, only been *playing* at missionary work. When I compare her work with that of the Presbyterian's or Methodist's, as measured by what has been done in the Home Mission, the Indian Mission, or the Foreign Mission Field; when I bethink me of the magnificent work of the great English Societies and remember that their funds are on the average drawn from donors not a whit better able to give than are thousands of our Canadian churchmen; when I remember that for one of the noblest works that God ever laid at the door of his people, the winning and holding for Christ and His Church of the most promising and important part of our great Northwest, the largest sum contributed last year was \$50; when I think of the increasing difficulty of even being allowed to present the claims of the great Canadian Mission field to Eastern Canada at all, when I think of all this, then I know in my heart that I am not speaking too strongly when I say that the Canadian Church has yet to learn the very alphabet of genuine, aggressive missionary enterprise.

But you ask, how will Consolidation help this state of things? Much every way. By the welding into one Church, of the Ecclesiastical Provinces of Canada and Rupert's Land and the Diocese of British Columbia, the great centres of the East will have brought to them two very important factors in the awaking of a true missionary spirit.

First, they will have brought under their very eyes and to their far fuller knowledge fields for missionary enterprise so vast, so varied, so rich in opportunities for telling and successful work, so stimulating in their resonant appeals for immediate and generous aid, so hopeful in the magnificent possibilities of their future that it only needs that they shall be really known in all their critical importance to stir the slumbering heart of the Church, as with the bugle call that wakes to battle, and to arouse it to a new energy of onset to occupy fresh fields in the Father's name, for the glory of our God and the honor of His Church. Of course in what I have said I take it for granted as a necessary corollary of Consolidation that such new channels of communication will be opened between the Church in the East, in the Northwest and on the Pacific Coast, as will vastly increase the knowledge that each section will have of the needs, the resources and the special difficulties of the other.

And again, there will be brought home to the Canadian Church, not only *knowledge* of the great missionary fields of the Church, but also, we trust, an increased sense of *responsibility* in regard to them. For *now*, these mission fields belong to the *whole Church*. In pleading for dioceses such as Qu'Appelle, Calgary, Athabasca, or Caledonia, we can say to churchmen in the East as well as in the West, "This is your own work now; yours is the responsibility before God for those unoccupied fields, those starving souls that you should feed with the bread of life." In years past we have been met by the plea that the great mission fields in the Northwest and on the Pacific Coast did not belong to the Church in the East, that they were a part of other organizations altogether and that his interest in them could not be aroused. Now it is different—that avenue of escape from missionary responsibility is closed. The churchmen of the East are just as much responsible for the well being or the ill being of Selkirk or Qu'Appelle as they are for the missions in Algoma or Labrador. And surely we have a reasonable right to expect that, as soon as the full meaning of Consolidation comes home to them, our brethren in the older provinces will be almost compelled to interest themselves in

those great mission fields which God has laid as a load of obligation at the doors of the Canadian Church; and interest in missionary work will surely develop enthusiasm for missionary work; and if we can once get *that* aroused far and wide amongst our people we need have little fear for the result.

In a *third* way I trust that Consolidation may tend to the advantage of our missionary work, and that is, by a broadening of the whole methods and machinery by which that work is carried on. That which has, more than anything else, hindered the vigorous development of the mission work of the Canadian Church has been a spirit of what I may call *Congregationalism*, the Congregationalism first of the Parish, then of the Diocese. The limiting of vision and of effort which has thus been bred in our people and crystallized in our financial organizations has militated sadly against a broad and progressive spirit in our Church. The Parish and the Diocese are vital necessities in the working of the Church of England system; but *they have their dangers*; and these dangers are more clearly evident in a rapidly changing and developing country like our own. The time has not come in Canada when the Diocese should reign supreme. It was not till Cuthbert and his noble band of fellow-laborers had done their work on the broad lines of *missionary* methods and organization that Theodore crystallized the resultant Christendom of early England into Parishes and Dioceses. Surely we in Canada may learn a lesson from the long past of the Mother Church. From ocean to ocean we are more or less a missionary Church still, and we shall never work out aright the future of our Church in the Dominion till in some way we consider the whole country to be one great mission field to be worked with unity of plan and purpose by one great central body. What we want in Canada and what Consolidation has made possible is a general Mission Board for the whole Dominion which shall direct the missionary operations of the Church from ocean to ocean, gathering contributions from every possible quarter and making the utmost possible use of every local and subordinate organization; and when the funds *have* been received, distributing those funds in the manner and in the localities where they will tell most effectively for the rebuilding of the work of the *whole* Church. Such a Board could get a knowledge of the capabilities and the needs of every portion of the Church such as no existing organization can do. Such a Board could present the work at once in its whole extent and in its due proportions in a manner that could compel the attention and arouse the enthusiasm of the Canadian Church as no local or Diocesan agencies ever *have* done or ever *will* do. Such a Board could arrange for freer and more frequent intercourse between the givers and the workers than has yet been possible. Let me illustrate this last point, which I hold to be an important one. What is the increasing difficulty which the North-Western Dioceses are meeting in the East? Is it not that doors of access to the Church's wealth are being shut in our faces by hands that should rather hold them open wide for us. I say advisedly to the Church's wealth. Here in the Northwest we have no wealthy men. We have men making money no doubt, but we have none with large sums made and safely invested as is the case in every city in well-nigh every large town in the East. I could name single congregations in the East who have more men with settled incomes of over \$5,000 a year than we have in the whole North West; there are single individuals belonging to our Church in the East who could buy up the twenty best off men of our Church in the Northwest. I say then advisedly that our most serious drawback is an increasing difficulty in being allowed to bring the needs of the Northwest before the real wealth of the Canadian Church. But if there