

CORRESPONDENCE.

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No. II.

To the Editor of the Church Guardian:

HALIFAX, N.S.

SIR,—Having cleared the way in the former paper by some preliminary considerations and the laying down of two principles, viz.: the retention of provinces, and the equality of Provinces, we proceed to examine the matter further in the light of History.

Presuming that it may be objected that these principles are antiquated, and that the Church in the Dominion should cast aside the teachings of the past and strike out a new pathway more suited to the needs of the present, let us glance for a moment at some of the modern substitutes which have been made for the Church's ancient organizations. The desirability of unification is admitted. There should be, no one will deny, some ultimate authority for the decision of such question as may gravitate through the inferior Synods to a central governing body. Such questions will in the nature of the case be few, and must be rigidly limited; but they do exist. There are spheres in which we may seek for guidance; the one is that of other Colonial Churches; the other is that of the Anglican Church in the United States.

1. First then, we consider the case of the Colonial Churches, and of these we will take as a typical example the Church in Australia and Tasmania.

In 1836 the See of Australia was formed, which included the whole of Australia, New Zealand, and Tasmania (formerly a dependency of the Diocese of Calcutta). New Zealand was detached in 1841, and Tasmania in 1842. In 1847, the Diocese of Australia was again divided, the Sees of Sydney, Newcastle, Adelaide and Melbourne, being formed; and the Bishop of Australia being created by letters patent, Bishop of Sydney and Metropolitan of Australia. The Province of New South Wales now consists of the Dioceses of Sydney, Bathurst, Goulburn, Grafton and Armidale, Newcastle and Riverina. There are besides, not forming part of the Province of New South Wales, but included in the General Synod presided over by the Bishop of Sydney as Primate, the Dioceses of Adelaide, Ballarat, Brisbane, Melbourne, North Queensland and Tasmania. Here then we have a number of Dioceses, regularly constituted a Provincial Synod, under a Metropolitan, the Bishop of Sydney, and a number of other dioceses not so organized, but the whole meeting in a General Synod under the presidency of a Primate. The General Synod, which we are seeking an example is there, but the whole arrangement is much more irregular than our own. We have Provinces regularly constituted, and independent dioceses, such as *e.g.* Newfoundland. But we can hardly be expected to take as our example a General Synod which is in itself an anomaly. It would surely be much easier for us to form a General Synod from our Provinces, after attaching to ourselves the independent dioceses, than that we should take for our example one Province united in General Synod with a number of independent dioceses. The difficulties in the way would be much less by acknowledging and preserving intact the rights and privileges of our present Metropolitans and their Provinces, and the due adjustment of the relations between the Dioceses, Provinces and General Synod would be much less hard of accomplishment. There is not, therefore, much help in this direction. It would be better to have the whole of the Diocese united in one large Provincial Synod, as is the case with the Church in New Zealand. But this solution of the question is

beset with difficulties of its own, which a consideration of our other exemplar will reveal.

2 The Church of the United States in its present form had its genesis as to organization from substantially the same fathers who formed the political constitution of that country after the Revolution. Their civil establishment was in many respects unlike any that the world had seen; and the republican President during his brief tenure of office is more of an absolute Ruler and has more personal power than any monarch of the effete civilizations of the Old World. Having so far wrought out their destiny. The Church was organized in a similarly original manner; and the result is practically a huge Provincial Synod, with no Metropolitan, but only a Presiding Bishop, who has no functions except that of presiding over his brethren in their triennial assembly, and no pretensions to personal rule. The four clerical and four lay representatives from each diocese to the House of Deputies, renders the assembly ponderous and unwieldy; and the attempt in contravention of the ancient practice of the Church Catholic to invent a new and improved legislature and deliberative organization has been found to be a comparative failure. The distances too between the different portions of the vast area enter into the question; and the time is not far distant when the Church in the United States will be resolved into at least three Provinces, each with its Metropolitan, which will be represented again in a reconstituted National Synod, the form and procedure of which will certainly be taken from primitive precedent. It is perhaps not too much to say that the agitation tending towards this step would have been by this time begun, but that the trial of the Bishop of Lincoln, and the preposterous and unhistorical claims made for the Archbishop of Canterbury as Metropolitan have excited alarm and caused cautious men to wait the turn of events.

But it is time to come to the positive side of the question, and to ask what light History casts upon such an assembly as the one contemplated by the resolutions of the Provincial Synod of Canada. If modern substitutes for the regularity and efficiency of the old methods of Church legislation be found to be wanting, let us turn to the old paths and searching see which is the good way.

At present the ultimate legislative authority of the Church rests in her Provincial Synods. There are not merely in *posse*, but in *esse*. Any attempt to destroy them now they are here in existence and in lively existence, will certainly fail. It will fail, first because the Synods will not efface themselves, there being in them too much attachment to ancient order and the constitution of the Church from the beginning, to consent to such a revolutionary step. It will fail secondly, because the Metropolitans themselves neither can, nor will unless the writer of this totally mistakes them, give up and feebly allow to collapse, what cannot but be regarded as a sacred trust, committed solemnly to their hands, and which they are bound to maintain. It is improper to express here more than the proper views of an individual; but it will be a sore grief and shock to very many of the Church's noblest and best both of the clergy and laity, should such a proposition be seriously entertained.

The power of legislation residing then in the Provincial Synods, the expression of it in any more concentrated form can only come from the common consent of those bodies, and is legitimately arrived at only by their combined action; not by their fusion. Fusion is a canonical impossibility.

The best, and practically the only available source of investigation and comparison for one branch of the Church, lies in the history of the two Convocations of Canterbury and York. Here we have two Provincial Synods whose jurisdiction is coterminous with the nation. They are entirely independent of each other.

The legislation of the one need not be accepted by the other. Nevertheless they have on various occasions joined together for deliberation and for time of the most important legislation which could engage the attention of the Church. It is from the study of the models here provided that we shall derive our best and wisest guidance in the delicate and difficult task which lies before the Conference meeting next month at Winnipeg. These will be treated somewhat in detail in a third and concluding paper.

F. PARTRIDGE.

THE PROPOSED UNIFICATION OF THE CHURCH.

To the Editor of the Church Guardian:

In following up my previous letter I desire to lay before your readers what appear to me to be serious objections to forming a number of Ecclesiastical Provinces under a General Synod:—

1st. I deprecate the unnecessary multiplying of machinery with its unavoidable friction with our Diocesan Synods attending to their own local affairs, and a General Synod, to which shall be transferred the present powers and prerogatives of the two Prov. Synods, and—if thought advisable—additional powers added; it appears to me we could have the desired, and necessary unification and everything working smoothly. But if we insert Provincial Synods between those, there will—I think be a great deal of friction without, or at best, very few, compensating advantages. What *e.g.* are to be the powers conferred upon those bodies? If they retain their present ones, what will the General Synod have to do? These are questions which will have to be solved before settling up this multiform legislation. And it will, I think, be very difficult to prevent the Provincial Synods encroaching upon the Dioceses, on the one hand; or the General body on the other. And then there will be the question of *ultra vires* constantly cropping up.

2nd. I deprecate the unnecessary expenditure of money. At the present time we find it very difficult to find men who can afford to attend the Provincial Synod of Canada; and so far we, in Nova Scotia, have not seen our way clear to assessing the Parishes for the purpose of defraying the expenses of delegates. Now if we add another Synod to those already existing we increase this difficulty, and one of three things must result from it. Either tax the people; leave the more distant Dioceses unrepresented; or leave Church legislation in the hands of a few wealthy individuals. And this leads us 3rdly to another objection, viz: the indirect representation of the people. At present the parishes elect their lay representatives to the Diocesan Synods, which Synods elect delegates to the Provincial ones. And, I suppose, in the event of a General Synod being constituted over these, they—the Provincial Synods—would elect delegates to it. And as it is now difficult to get the people generally to take any intelligent interest in the Provincial Synods, the difficulty of getting them practically interested in the General one would be far greater. There may be those who would not regard this as an un-mixed evil. But I think, if we profess to govern the Church by representation, the representation should be real. Against what I have said, it may be urged that the work to be performed by the one body would be too much, and the experience of the Church in the U. S. may be quoted. I reply that this would be a good check to that evil of which we are in great danger—over legislation.

Thanking you for space,

I am, etc,

W. J. ANGLANT.

Rawdon, N. S., July 15th, 1890.