

most *powerful*, or the most *prosperous* of all the Christian communions—certainly not here in Canada. While we, in every diocese from the Atlantic to the Pacific, have been more or less at issue with our own spiritual kith and kin, asserting the truth of our views and the erroneousness of theirs; united Romanists, united Presbyterians, united Methodists—mighty hosts who knew their own minds and were at peace amongst themselves, swept past us in the race, leaving us where we are at this present, numerically *fourth* in the Dominion of Canada. This condition of things we owe mainly to our own internal discords, and these in turn we owe to a certain want of clearness in parts of the Book of Common Prayer. Hence, ultimately the church herself, as the *Ecclesia docens*, is answerable to some extent for our present position.

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We are often told that "parties" within the church are no new thing; they existed in the days of the Apostles and have existed more or less ever since. As lawyers occasionally take opposite views of the same act of parliament, so Christians take opposite views of truth, and truth is many sided, &c., &c.

It is true that parties did exist in Apostolic times, and it is also true that the inspired Apostle St. Paul utterly condemned them as dishonouring to Christ. Further: The Council of Jerusalem promptly and officially declared the mind of the church in the matter of the circumcision of the Gentile converts. Not that such decision put an end at once to the dispute, but it made clear to the world the attitude of the church, and manifested to all that she knew her own mind. In later times Donatists and Arians, Nestorians and Pelagians, were dealt with in language as unambiguous as our own church has used in the rejection of Papal supremacy or the doctrine of Purgatory. Parties calling themselves Christian, *external* to the church there always have been, but not parties *within* the church engaged in never-ending dispute as to what the church herself means by her own words. In all other communions, internal agreement on matters of faith and practice is, in the last resource effected by authority. In our case, though we have differed amongst ourselves for more than 300 years as to what the church means by this or that, we seem but little nearer to an authoritative and final settlement. That lawyers variously interpret the laws of the land is true, but that fact is not to the point in this discussion. There is an official voice, that immediately upon appeal judges and