

ral Council, and submitting to its decisions. But we may ask, what, next to a general Council, was the predominant authority? And we find in the records of the early Church, clear and unequivocal testimony, that authority, second only to that of general Councils, was vested in National or Provincial Synods. The Church Catholic was divided not into separate or isolated dioceses, but into national Churches; these national Churches were subdivided into dioceses. It was by destroying the unity and independence of the national Churches that Rome succeeded in establishing her usurped dominion; and it was by asserting her unity and independence as a national Church, that the Church of England was the last to surrender, and the first to recover her freedom and her purity.

The great end therefore, which we have to aim at, is the organization and development of the "Church of Canada." The great danger which threatens us is that we shall become a certain number of separate, independent dioceses, instead of constituting one strong, united, Canadian Church. And this danger is not the less real, because at the present moment we cannot appreciate all the evil consequences of such a course. Bound as we shall think ourselves, each diocese, by strong ties of affection and duty to our Mother Church of England, we shall seem to be, in a manner, connected with each other; but, as years pass by, these ties will inevitably grow weaker, and when they are finally dissolved, there will no longer be any bond of union between ourselves.

The same danger threatened the church of the United States, but was happily averted by the wisdom and piety of her noble sons. Amid difficulties and discouragements, from which we are happily free; left without a single Bishop to direct their counsels; denied the aid and countenance of the Mother Church in England; they were led by the divine Head of the Church—can we doubt it?—to see the necessity of uniting together as one Church of the United States, instead of keeping aloof from each other as churches of the separate States; and see what great things in eighty years they have accomplished. A brief reference to the successive steps by which they effected this great object may not be without interest or profit.

The peace of 1763 accomplished the severance of the colonies from the Sovereignty of

England; and necessarily the separation of the Church in the United States from the guardianship of the Church of England. In August of the same year a convention was held in Maryland, where the independence of the "Protestant Episcopal Church of Maryland," was declared, with "its entire authority to establish its own internal government." In May 1784 the first step towards union was taken at a meeting of various members of the churches held at Philadelphia, when certain fundamental principles were adopted. In September of the same year similar resolutions were adopted at a meeting of clergymen of Massachusetts and Rhode Island. In October a number of clergymen from New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland and Virginia assembled at New York. They were not invested with any authority, but they agreed to recommend a series of resolutions to the churches of their respective States. The first was as follows: "That there shall be a General Convention of the Episcopal Church in the United States of America;" and the last designated Philadelphia, September 1785, as the place and time for the first meeting of such a body. Then and there accordingly delegates assembled from six of the States mentioned, and from South Carolina. Massachusetts and Connecticut stood aloof, and it appears from the memoirs of Bishop White, that the northern clergy generally were under apprehensions of there being a disposition on the part of the Southern members to make material deviations from the ecclesiastical system of England, in the article of Church Government. At this first General Convention the draft of an ecclesiastical constitution was submitted. The second General Convention met on the 20th of June, 1786. The constitution was debated and after several alterations had been made, unanimously adopted. The next meeting of the General Convention was in July 1789. Three Bishops, White, Seabury and Provoost, had been consecrated, and the former presided. The constitution was ratified and signed, and the convention adjourned to the 29th of September, in order to meet the views of the churches of Massachusetts, Connecticut and New Hampshire. Its labours were then resumed, and a committee was chosen to confer with the northern churches. The deputies from those churches finally signi-