

L. C. 11.

NOVA SCOTIA

Church Chronicle.

VOL. III.

HALIFAX, AUGUST, 1867

No. 7

*"Ad profectum sacrosanctæ matris ecclesiæ."*

THE GENERAL ANGLICAN COUNCIL

WHEN the first difficulty arose in the Christian Church, on the question of the continuation of Jewish observances, under the gospel dispensation, and whilst for the sake of offending neither Jew nor Gentile, the disciples were no doubt sorely tempted by Satan to be all things to all men, at the cost of the unity of the Church, the matter in dispute was not settled by the formation of parties, and the invention of terms of reproach. Instead of shunning each other, these men of God met together in the mother-city Jerusalem, under the presidency of their Metropolitan, St. James, and in full discussion in which the subject was viewed on all sides, the Holy Spirit, who works by means, blessed their deliberations and guided them to a right issue. How different would have been the subsequent history of the Church if Satan could have prevailed at that time in causing the holy apostles, so far to mistrust each other as to refuse to meet in council. No doubt he suggested to many that St. Paul was an unfaithful Jew—that St. Peter was a temporizer—that others of the blessed Apostles were men of one-sided or extreme views. But in those days of simple trust in God's over-ruling providence, the brethren felt that every good man held some portion of the truth which in council might assist others looking from a different stand-point, and that He who ruleth all things would not suffer His Church to be misled in her solemn decisions.

The right of holding Councils in the Church being thus sealed with the divine approbation, as years rolled on and errors crept in, what do we find was the Church's mode of publicly exposing and casting out these errors? Was it by warning each ecclesiastic to stand aloof from his brother with the Pharisaic exclamation—"I am holier than thou?" No. When Donatus—secretly inspired by hatred against the Bishop of Carthage—brought in the first Puritan persecution, and taught that not the Catholic Church, but his own judgment was infallible, rebaptized such catholics as would listen to him, and trampled under foot the Eucharist consecrated by the priests of the orthodox communion, he and his followers in an evil moment for themselves—at length agreed to meet the Catholics in Council at Arles, and were there confuted and condemned. Arius, who denied the divinity of the Lord that bought him, obtained immense success in propagating his deadly heresy so long as the faithful contended with his followers singly or by congregations. But the heretics again by God's providence were induced to meet the Catholics in the Council of Nicea, and again God manifested His approbation of such councils by the utter refutation of error, and triumph of the truth. When Macedonius denied the divinity of the Holy Ghost,—it was not by letters (the newspapers of those days) that this heresy was cast out, but by the assembled wisdom and