

Church Association of the Diocese of Toronto.

OCCASIONAL PAPER, NO. VIII.

THE SOURCE OF OUR UNHAPPY DIVISIONS.

It has been the practice within this Diocese, long before the Church Association was formed, to begin the daily sessions of the Synod with this prayer:—"Give us grace seriously to lay to heart the great danger we are in by our unhappy divisions. Take away all hatred and prejudice, and whatsoever else may hinder us from Godly unity and concord."

In June last the Synod, "deploing the existence of dissensions and differences in the Church," affirmed them to be "caused by the unfortunate introduction of innovations and novelties in the Ritual," and expressed "its hope that the Bishop, Clergy, and Laity will unite in preserving in its simple form, the Ritual of the Church of England, and the doctrines handed down to us from the Reformation."

This "introduction of innovations and novelties in the Ritual," and their connection with the revival of grave doctrinal errors, constitute the one subject to which the Church Association has from the first earnestly invited attention. Those who really desire a restoration of Godly unity and concord must see that it is vain to disguise any longer the real source of our unhappy divisions; or to hope for peace until it is removed. Believing then that they are the truest friends of peace who expose the source of discord, we proceed once more to review the subject as presented to us in the letter of the Lord Bishop to the Lay members of the Executive Committee of this Association.

If the novelties referred to amounted—as some would have us to believe,—only to a more or less ornate and musical service, and were not the outward signs of grave doctrinal error, the Church Association would never have been called into existence. The Lord Bishop is pleased to say:—"The Church of the Holy Trinity in this city is adduced as practising a 'high ritual.' It is unfortunately the fact that those who assert this, make no distinction between an ordinary choral service simply conducted, as it is in the cathedral or Collegiate Churches of the United Kingdom, and those unauthorized novelties which have been foisted upon that perfectly lawful manner of conducting the services of the Church." This will be best answered by reviewing what follows.