

rightly applied in various ways and to various churches to-day. No apology, therefore, or excuse is needed for taking these words as a message from the Lord to the Church of England in Canada to-day, and endeavoring to see what open door is set before us, and what is therefore the conduct demanded of us. No Christian who desires the welfare of the church can contemplate the existing condition of things upon this continent with other than a feeling of distress. Probably the evil of disunion is more recognisable in Canada than elsewhere. All over the land are to be seen the rival organizations of Protestantism, amongst which there is indeed a developing tendency to federation; but federation, if it could be accomplished, would not effect anything in the way of destroying the evil spirits of jealousy and rivalry, or the pride which allows of their being "puffed up for one against another." and, in the midst of these, the church is lamentably weak. "Thy strength is but small" is painfully true of her. Nevertheless, the "open door" before her is that of reconciliation. She alone can hold up the primitive organization before the eyes of the Protestant bodies on the one hand, and the primitive faith before the eyes of the Roman Church on the other. It is no small thing that we have been guided to adopt and make known the articles of the Lambeth conference of A.D. 1888, as forming a basis of negotiation with any of the bodies of our separated christian brethren, with a view to union; and, though the Presbyterians in the United States have officially announced that they will go no further in the matter, until they are recognised as a church, in all respects equal to any constituted on the basis of the Fourth Article—viz: The Historic Episcopate—yet we should not be discouraged in our hope of ultimately achieving union, nor hold ourselves aloof, as unwilling to discuss the matter further.

The wounds in the Body of Christ are too many and too deep to be healed with the salves of amiable words, and the sticking-plasters of square-cut definitions; and the separations have lasted too long for union to be effected as soon as those in the various folds begin to speak kindly to one another across the chasms which divide them.

Let us think, for a moment, of what it means, not only for East and West, but for Rome and Geneva, to come together, not in the rigid shackles of dead uniformity, but in the elastic bonds of living unity; and we shall begin to recognise what length of time, what delicacy of handling, what patience—begotten of the charity which "beareth all things, endureth all things;" what loving consideration for one another's difficulties, prejudices, and traditions; what humble readiness to learn the lessons which God's spirit would teach the church universal through the experiences of the several parts thereof,—what meekness in instructing those that oppose themselves, are needed, if this end is ever to be attained.

Nor those qualities only, but, amongst ourselves, the allaying of party-spirit and the bitterness born of it, and the begetting of the readiness, while holding as tenaciously as ever the various doctrines of the faith, and "the form of sound words" in which we have been accustomed to express them,—to accord to others who express them differently, and who lay greater stress than we do upon other doctrines, the position of being legitimately within the body, and the right to maintain and teach the truths which they believe and value; the exorcising of the narrow spirit which is selfishly intolerant of everything except what itself perceives,

and would compel all to adopt its own phraseology, on pain of being dubbed heretics and being cast out of the church, and the bringing in of the wise and humble spirit, which, while thankful for the truths it believes, and the language in which they are expressed, yet welcomes the new results of advances into the hitherto unexplored parts of the Infinite inheritance of the truth, and the new settings and applications of that which has been already acquired.

But this temper is rare, and slow in winning converts, yet is it all important in securing the blessing of union among "all who profess and call themselves Christians."

Conscious of the presence of the Lord with us as a church,—grateful to Him "who brought our fathers out of the land of Egypt, and delivered them out of the house of bondage,"—remembering "all the way the Lord our God has led us in the wilderness," holding fast "the statutes and the judgments,"—as well as rejoicing in the privileges of the covenant of grace,"—given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,"—we may advance through the "open door" of reconciliation, which He has set before us, and which "no man can shut," if only we are still willing to follow the guidance of His Spirit along the unknown path which will issue in an undivided Israel entering upon the Land of Promise.

Is it too much to hope that the Church of England in Canada, in her corporate capacity, may see fit to publish, abroad, an open and hearty acknowledgment of the blessing which the Great Head of the Church has vouchsafed to those portions of the household of faith which are organized upon another basis than that of the three-fold order of the ministry, even if she cannot as yet recognise the validity while denying the regularity of the Holy Orders of their ministers.

But, if we would gain their favorable consideration of our propositions looking toward union, there must be no question as to our maintaining in their integrity the constant preaching of the fundamental doctrines of the Gospel, for which the best among them are "jealous with a godly jealousy."

The necessity for every individual to fulfil the conditions of his Baptism, to repent of his sinful nature as well as of his personal sins, and to exercise a living faith in God's mercy through Christ; the standing of a soul as "just before God," through faith in the blood of Christ; the continued submission of the will, and the conduct to the guidance of the Holy Spirit; the sufficiency of Holy Scripture for salvation; and its authority as the inspired Word of God; the reality and efficacy of prayer, and of the grace obtained thereby; these and such like doctrines our dissenting brethren expect that we as a church shall see that our ministers preach with no uncertain sound, but "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven"—"in demonstration of the spirit and of power."

We must see to it also that we do not suffer such an interpretation of the Historic Episcopate, with its necessary corollary of the grace of Holy Orders, to be given, as would make the ministry of Christ such an indispensable go-between of God and man's soul, as that without such mediator, a man dared not, or could not approach his father in heaven. For, if such an idea is by them entertained, we shall hope in vain that they will admit our claim.

Nor, again, shall we make any advance towards disarming the prejudices and winning their kindly consideration of our position, if we make our regularity and their irregularity in the matter of Holy Orders of