

was president of the meeting; he prefaced his remarks by saying:—“Personally I have no strong ritualistic sympathies; but from my youth up I have stood forward on all occasions for the integrity of the book of Common Prayer, as containing within it the liberties of Churchmen. And I, for one, cannot consent to the narrowing of those liberties on the one side or the other.” And again he continued:—“Those who are earnest for the re-union of Christendom upon the condition of bringing our Church back into more entire accord with the doctrine and practice of the Church of the first three centuries, are frequently accused of a deliberate intention of bringing her back to obedience to the Church of Rome. As a man of honour, and a loving and dutiful member of the Church of England, I utterly repudiate such an intention on my own part, and on the part of those over whom I have been invited to preside. To long for the union of Christendom, to seek communion with the Eastern Churches, or with those national Churches of the West, now under the Roman rule, is very different from a desire to bring our Church into submission to the Ultramontane See.” These words are plain and clear to those who can read the signs of the times, and they are echoed by all true and strong Churchmen throughout the Anglican obedience. They are felt to be true by all moderate men, whatever their private opinions, by all, in fact, who are not blinded by bigotry and prejudice. And with sorrow, too, they echo the speaker’s other remarks, that while these contentions are going on infidelity is making terribly rapid strides; uniformity may be a very desirable end, but a rigid uniformity would drive many into infidelity, and many more would seek refuge in “the authoritative teaching of the Church of Rome.” We need, indeed, “the wisdom that would suggest forbearance and charity, and pray for healing and peace; for extravagancies are being aggravated by the way men now seek to suppress them.”

Other speakers followed the noble chairman in the same temperate and moderate tone, not seeking to impose their faith upon others, but only asking that the comprehensiveness of the Church of England be not destroyed by hasty legislation. There seems, indeed, no sufficient ground for attempting to exclude from that communion its High Church members, who form well nigh half the whole body: would not the Church of England be weakened? Would she not be utterly prostrated, and open to the attacks of the Church of Rome? Lord Shaftesbury might live to regret that he had destroyed the only organisation, which he has openly declared that he believes to be the only one capable of resisting Papal encroachments. This meeting, the tone and spirit of which we have endeavoured to portray, is assuredly one of the great facts of the