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"Glory to God in the highest, and on Earth peace, good will toward men."

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## ANNIVERSARY.

### BRITISH REFORMATION SOCIETY.

This Society was formed in the year 1823, with a view to promote the true principles of Protestantism, as established at the Reformation. It already numbers several auxiliaries in England, but its exertions are chiefly directed to Ireland, where, by holding public meetings for disputation, and the circulation of tracts, it hopes to create a spirit of inquiry amongst the Catholic population.

2d Anniversary—May 22d.

This meeting held in Freemason's Hall, was numerously attended. Lord MANDERVILLE took the chair at eleven o'clock; and after the Rev. Mr. STEWART had offered up a prayer, his lordship addressed the meeting. It appeared to him, that the operations of the society might be viewed as they related both to Protestants and to Romanists, and also as they referred to popery, whether considered individually or collectively. He would make another remark. Protestants should not proceed beyond the truth, and make the breach between Protestants and Catholics wider than it really was. He thought the evangelicals were in great danger with regard to the sacraments. In denying the ubiquity of Christ's humanity, and the real presence in the Lord's supper, we sometimes went so far as to lose sight of the great truth, that he who pervaded infinity was specially present with his church in the sacrament. Those two points he had touched upon, because it was not their object to address themselves to individuals of the Roman Catholic persuasion. He conceived that the operations of the Society should be conducted in a spirit of love and charity; it was foolish and unchristian to attempt to make converts in any other way; but the speakers should bear in mind the distinction between addressing Catholics and addressing Protestants, relative to the corruptions of popery. Their business that day was to address the members of the society relative to popery as a system, and in so doing, they must full, and freely declare how popery showed itself in all its abominations. It became every person not only to flee from popery, but to avoid having any communication with it. He would not say, that by the settlement of the Catholic question England had become part and parcel of the ten kingdoms; but he would say, that if England, professing to protest against popery, still continued to protect it, as it did by the act of the House of Commons, to grant supplies for the college of Maynooth, the design which was to educate priests to support the doctrines of popery—if that continued, England must be part of the ten kingdoms, and would go down with the others. His Lordship concluded by calling upon the Secretary (Lieut. RIND) to read the Report:—

The report stated, that auxiliary associations had been formed in different parts of England, amongst others, at Blackburn, the post-town of the Jesuit establishment at Stonyhurst; and it mentioned, that the creed of St. Francis, the ring of St. Joseph, and the scapulary of St. Virgin Mary—books which were supposed to be peculiar to the dark age—were openly exposed for sale in the shops of the Catholic booksellers at Manchester. The report adverted to the great efforts at proselytism making by the Roman Catholics, and pointed to the great increase of chapels and priests in Northumberland and Lancashire, within the last few years, as reasons for redoubled efforts on the part of the society. It had now twenty-five Scripture readers in its employ. The receipts of the society, up to the 31st of March, were 2662l. 11s. 9d.; the expenditure 2,633l. 2s. 3d.; since then there had been an increase in the funds, which not only paid off the outstanding debts, to the amount of 277l., but had left from 40l. to 50l. in hand.

The Hon. and Rev. GEORGE NOEL said, that before submitting the first resolution, he wished to suggest to those who conducted the operations of the society, that it was unfair and unjust to refer to persecution, as necessarily connected with the

Roman Catholic religion, where it only accidentally arose out of it. Unfortunately, it belonged to Protestants and Roman Catholics to persecute. The origin of the principle of persecution might be found in the disposition of human nature to be supreme; but there was, in his opinion, another source whence persecution arose—in assimilating the character of Christianity to that of Judaism. Intolerance essentially belonged to the character of Judaism, which admitted of no relaxation of power or opinion; and why? Because God was the civil as well as the religious law-giver. It was the error of the Roman Catholic system to establish itself by a reference to Judaism; but in referring to Judaism, the Roman Catholics forgot, that under that system there was a Divine Empire, who would admit of no appeal, who would pluck up the tares from the wheat. Under Christianity, they were suited to grow together; the Scriptures were the only guide to refer to, and Christ had expressly declared, that his kingdom was not of this world. He feared, that many of his hearers beneath mistook the condition of Christianity for that of Judaism. He thought, that so soon as England having become part and parcel of the ten kingdoms, by the alteration in the civil code, she had now put Christianity on the direct track on which the Scriptures put it. England had contemplated the kingdom of Christ as an external kingdom, but had kept up the dispensation of the tares and the wheat. When the blaze of revelation should again irradiate the world, and uniformity prevail, idolatry would no longer exist; for men would then judge according to the truth under which they were then living, and not under the fallible operation of human intellect. Then would the tares and the wheat no longer mingle; but the tares would be bound up in bundles, and the wheat be gathered in to the everlasting garner. The Hon. and Rev. gentlemen, in continuation, said, that in speaking of the Roman Catholics, it was to the system, and not to individuals, he referred. It mattered not to his argument, whether Luther or the Pope were good or bad. It was but fair also that Protestants should take the authorised standards of popery, and not individual opinions, whenever they attacked the system. Catholics might press as hard upon Protestants, upon the want of a pure reception of the Gospel, as Protestants might upon the point of persecution. A great many tracts produced by Protestants did not represent the standard principles of their church. He would further remark, that Protestants dealt unfairly by Roman Catholics, in attributing to them idolatry in bowing to the host, viewing it as they did. Mr. Noel, amidst some disapprobation from the meeting, expressed his concurrence in the opinion of Mr. Fater, that the doctrine of transubstantiation was a question of pure evidence; and said, that when a Roman Catholic, taking literally the text of Scripture, "This is my body," bowed down to the host, he (Mr. N.) could not but believe that the man bowed to Christ. *Hises.* In speaking to a Roman Catholic, they should bring not abstract reasoning, but the plain evidence of Scripture, and then they should tell him, that his doctrines carried him away from the simple, sublime, and glorious declarations of the word of God, which would bring him at once to the bosom of his Saviour; and make him rejoice in the atonement of his blood. The Rev. gentleman concluded by depicting, in forcible colours, the spiritual consolation and happiness resulting from a study of the Holy Scriptures; and earnestly imploring the society to go amidst the population of Ireland, and proclaim the word of salvation, that was full, free, and eternal.

The noble CHAIRMAN said, that a gentleman had reminded him, that the meeting should consider each speaker as offering his individual sentiments, and not those of the society.

The Rev. J. W. CUNNINGHAM regretted the turn the discussion had taken, in the present occasion was not the proper one for deciding on the respective merits of the Protestant and Roman Catholic

churches. If a day were fixed for the discussion, he had no doubt many persons would come forward and advocate the cause of Christian truth. Though he concurred with his reverend friend as to the propriety of the political measures lately adopted towards the Roman Catholics, he must contend, that the persecutions of Protestants and Papists were not alike. A good Papist must be a thorough persecutor, for he held, that no man could be saved out of the pale of his own church. He challenged a single instance, where the Catholic church had possessed power, in which she had not persecuted. (*Applause*) True it was, that the tares now grew up with the wheat; but it did not follow that it was right to sow as many tares as they could. With regard to a third point dwelt upon by his reverend friend, that a man was guilty of no crime if he acted up to his conviction—his error might arise from inattention to the truth; and he would maintain, that a man would thence be guilty of all the consequences flowing from the adoration of the Eucharist.

Mr. DRUMMOND rose to order. According to a rule before laid down, every speaker was at liberty to state his own opinions, but not to attack the opinions of those who preceded him.

The noble CHAIRMAN said, that no regulation like that had been made at the present meeting; but unless it were adopted, much time would be lost in explanations and rejoinders.

Mr. POWNALL observed, that if a person uttered error, it was indispensably necessary that he should be answered.

Mr. CUNNINGHAM resumed.—If there was a human being to whom he would bow, it was his Rev. friend, to whose arguments he had been adverting. His own lamp had been kindled at the full blaze of that Rev. gentleman's a thousand times, and he prayed God to bless him. But he had trodden upon debatable ground, a little foreign to the purpose. Mr. Cunningham now adverted to the operations of the society, expressing his regret, that the deputation last year (of which he formed one) had been dissuaded from proceeding into the interior of Ireland, by a false alarm for their safety; and proceeded to draw a parallel between the situation of the missionaries in Ireland, and that of the first preachers of the Gospel, on their apostolic missions. Let the society but make the likeness complete, by going forth in the spirit of the Apostles, by avoiding all political questions; with the name of Christ in their mouths, and the love of Christ in their hearts, let them go forth, conquering and to conquer, over depraved human nature. This seemed to him the right spirit of the society, and he trusted his friends would adhere to it. (*Cheers.*)

T. E. GORDON, Esq. hon. secretary to the society, said, if he were to select a passage from Scripture as a practical motto for the institution, it would be this—"Say unto the children of Israel, that they go forward;" and if more were wanting to explain the method, "with simplicity, civility, and decision." With regard to the controversial part of its practice, the language of St. Augustine was the most applicable he could employ—"Destroy the errors, but leave the men. Presume upon the truth without pride; contend for the truth without bitterness." While he repeated, therefore, that the spirit of the society was Christian, he affirmed also, that the practice of the society had been consistent. The first injunction given by his reverend friend (Mr. Noel) was to grant the church of Rome an oblivion of all past atrocities. The use made by him of those facts of persecution was always strictly defensive; but not so with the doctrines of a persecuting tendency still taught by Roman Catholic authority. [Mr. Gordon here read some of the notes to the Douay Bible, purchased from the bookseller to Maynooth college; and asked Mr. Noel whether he would not feel himself called upon to combat any Roman Catholic missionary who might attempt to promulgate such doctrines?] Mr. Noel signified assent. Mr. Gordon then read from a catechism used in America as a tract, purporting to explain the doctrine of justification and