

“Let us express our satisfaction with one other feature. There was no uniformity in the celebration. There was danger lest it should be prostituted to sectarian purposes. Happily—and to the honour of the churches let it be said—the danger has been averted. It would have been the saddest of all spectacles to see this memorial day made a day of sectarian profit—to see the two thousand dishonoured by their names being used merely as charms wherewith to charm for the profiting of a denomination or the magnifying of a sect.

“The general character and drift of the discourses may be seen by looking at the texts. The eleventh and twelfth chapters of the Hebrews appear to have been the most favourite sources, but were by no means universally selected. The words most frequently chosen appear to have been from the eleventh chapter:—‘And he went out, not knowing whither he went.’

“The manner in which the subjects were dealt with will commend itself generally to the reader’s profound admiration. With great appropriateness, the ejected were allowed in many instances, where they had been the means of founding existing churches, to speak for themselves, copious extracts being made from their ‘Farewell Sermons.’ Their history of the Ejection was also, in very many cases, given. The most elaborate historical review was presented by Mr. Binney.

“The marked similarity of the lessons drawn from the event commemorated on this remarkable day will scarcely fail to attract general notice. Many, if not the majority, of the preachers unhesitatingly drew the anti-State-Church moral. ‘Man’s instincts and reasonings reject the rule of any human authority in the matter of the conscience and the soul,’ said the Rev. G. W. Conder. ‘It is in vain,’ said the Rev. A. Raleigh, ‘to make another experiment of putting down free thought by force.’ ‘We learn’ from this ‘the absolute futility of persecution.’ So the Rev. Charles Stanford considered that the connexion of religion with the State was the principal cause of division; and the Rev. Mark Wilks denounced it as an evil. In the sermons of the Rev. John Graham, Paxton Hood, Dr. Parker, T. W. Aveling, A. M. Henderson, Benjamin Kent, T. T. Lynch, and many others, will be found similar remarks. ‘The ultimate principles of the two differ,’ said the last-named preacher. ‘The State compels: the Church persuades. The State rests on power: the Church on thought. The State makes an outward sphere: the Church rules the hearts and consciences of men.’

“Other spiritual facts and truths were not missed. The event, said the Rev. J. C. Harrison, teaches ‘conscientiousness not only in subscription, but in every department of religion and practical life.’ ‘We learn from it,’ said the Rev. J. Kilsby Jones, ‘that there is such a thing as human conscience.’ This lesson to Nonconformists was forcibly expressed by the Rev. Professor Green, of Rawdon College—‘If our Nonconformity be worth anything, it must be based on faith, and a faith that is self-renouncing.’

“The manner in which Churchmen of the present day were referred to will scarcely, we may venture to hope, excite a single angry feeling. ‘The secret,’ said Mr. Binney, ‘seemed to be possessed by some how subscription might be harmonized with the denial of almost everything subscribed;’ but, said Mr. Jones, of Tonbridge Chapel, we make ‘no imputations on those who subscribe;’ and, said Mr. Stanford, ‘we judge no man.’ The hope was also