

ing them the use of the Hall.

Dr. Begg then moved the appointment of a Committee to consider the suggestions which had been made, regarding a re-publication of the works of the Reformers.

After singing part of the 19th Psalm, the large meeting separated.

The above account of the proceedings of this important meeting, we have abridged from the reports in the *Edinburgh Witness*, and partly from those in the *Banner of Ulster*. We understand that the principal papers read, will be collected and published in a Tri-centenary Commemorative Volume.

THE EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION.

Address delivered by Rev. Thos. McPherson, before the Synod of Pres. Church of Canada.

Fathers, Brethren, and Christian Friends :

Were I to yield to the impulse of my own feelings, I would shrink from addressing this large and intelligent assembly on the most momentous subject, which has been so eloquently discussed by the previous speakers, not that I am influenced by any morbid sensibility relative to my comparative popularity before such an audience as this, but because being called, without timely notice to address you, I read with great injustice to this branch of the subject which has been assigned me—"The results of the Scottish Reformation."

The term "Reformation" does not literally imply improvement, but simply the act of giving to anything another form; and as this act is seldom deliberately done, except with the view of improvement, the term by which the act is designated has generally obtained a favorable signification.

That the Reformation in Scotland has given to all things as far its influence has extended a new form, cannot be denied, but that that new form is an improvement on the former state of things, is not universally conceded. All Roman Catholics are accustomed to look on the Reformation as a grievous curse, and not a blessing to the world. This, then is the question on which the propriety of commemorating the Reformation work mainly hinges. If the acknowledged changes have been clearly injurious to men's interests, the period and agencies which produced them ought to be not only lamented but execrated, and the progress of the work, which is productive of disastrous results, as speedily as possible counteracted. The sooner the Protestant cause is suppressed the better for the interests of humanity. This is the view and aim of all the enemies of the Reformation. Blinded, by prejudice and early training, to all the blessed fruits of the glorious change, the bigoted papist, even while enjoying in the British dominions the greatest privileges consequent on the diffusion and influence of Reformation principles, privileges of which the subjects of popish rulers are never allowed to partake, and for the sake of which the oppressed inhabitants of popish countries, maddened by the tyranny of their heartless rulers, are driven to insurrection in spite of all the ghastly terrors of the spiritual power of their oppressors, will decry the Reformation—the source of his innumerable blessings—as a work of the do-

vil, and hate and persecute wherever he has the power, all who support these principles, as heretics and schismatics, to be exterminated from the face of the earth.

The question then arises, whose views are right,—The papist, or the protestant? "By their fruits shall ye know them." Let us therefore test the Reformation in Scotland by this criterion. It cannot be denied, except by such as "love darkness rather than light because their deeds are evil," that the diffusion of knowledge is beneficial society, especially the knowledge of God's revealed will to men. Before the Reformation, absolutely nothing was done by the rulers of the church to promote that desirable end, and this is a fact attested by universal history and corroborated by the present condition of all popish countries. The priest and the Bible have ever been antagonistic, it has ever been in his view a dangerous book, not to be touched, but consigned to the flames.—Dangerous it is, no doubt, not to the temporal or eternal interests of men, but to the priestcraft of popery, to the superstitions of ignorance, and the despotism of tyrants; dangerous to the boundless ghostly authority of those who "make merchandise of men's souls" and lord it over God's heritage. Hence it is a hated and interdicted book, even the biased and disingenuous translation which has been forced from the popish hierarchy by the example of Reformers, cannot be indiscriminately entrusted to the laity. It sets forth too much truth for the safety of the craft. But the Reformation in Scotland has scattered Bibles in every cottage of the land, established schools in every parish where the youth of the country have divine truths early impressed upon the mind, erected colleges for the suitable training of a ministry qualified to instruct the community, and spread at convenient distances sanctuaries through the length and breadth of the country for the pure worship of God, and the edification of his people. This has resulted in an enlightened and intelligent population, not to be excelled by any other nation in the world. If, then, I am asked to show the good fruits of the Reformation in Scotland I have only to point to her multiplicity of Bibles, her excellent system of scriptural schools, her colleges and literary institutions, her christian churches, her learned divines, and her distinguished philosophers, all combining to convert the naturally barren soil of a mountainous country into fertile fields, and by diffusing a spirit of morality and honest industry, rendering the population rich, prosperous, intelligent and happy. Look to Scotland as influenced by her Reformation, and contrast her present with her ante-Reformation state. How great the contrast! How different her condition from that of any popish country!

The light of Bible truth has ever been favorable to industry, sobriety, and economy, and consequently productive of wealth, and temporal prosperity. This is patent to every unprejudiced observer. Wherever popery reigns, its debasing sway is marked with beggary and crime. In the south of Ireland, with a richer soil and a more congenial climate than in the north, the mass of the people are steeped in poverty, dependent in seasons of scarcity on a "rate in aid" levied off the north for their subsistence. In Italy, the garden of the world, but the centre of popery, the squalid mis-

ery of the liege subjects of His Holiness is a theme of every tourist. In Canada a popish district is marked as such by its wretched hovels, its slovenly agriculture, and its ragged settlers. In every part of the world popery is in this respect, as it professes to be in more important matters, ever the same. Its own votaries cannot but see this, and are sadly puzzled to account for it. I have known some of them console themselves with the thought that it accords with the arrangements of Providence to give the protestants, like Dives, the good things of this world, and to the catholics the evil things, to cause them to seek the comforts in store for them in the world to come.

The Reformation has not only spread the knowledge of religious truth, and promoted industry, but it has also expanded the human mind, and given scope to its faculties. In the dark ages prior to the Reformation, it is granted that philosophic subjects were carefully studied by some men of great minds who could not be confined by the general routine of monastic life. But did popery countenance such? Were they at full liberty to prosecute their researches, into the laws of nature, and draw rational deductions from their discoveries of facts? Were they not bound by ecclesiastical dogmas, beyond or contrary to which, they dare not promulgate principle or doctrines however accordant with the clearest light of philosophic truth. What Protestant would award a dungeon as the righteous doom of the heresy of believing in the diurnal motion of the earth?

Besides, the Reformation has led philosophy into a new channel. Its subjects of investigation are of a more practical and profitable nature. Hence the discoveries of the power of steam, electricity, magnetism, &c., hence the application of these powers to manufactures, commerce, and even agriculture, and hence the almost annihilation of time, space, and oppressive manual labour. The philosophy and science of the present day does not consist of vain babblings. What grave philosophers would now sit in keen dispute as to the number of angels that could dance together on the point of a cambric needle. Such, however, was the "philosophy, falsely so called" of the sages of the olden time, and such would have been the philosophy of sages of the present day, if Rome had her will and her way. Why it is but very recently that the safety of religion being endangered by the introduction of Railways into the States of the Church was decided, if it be yet fully decided, and certainly the introduction of steam power to agriculture would be rank heresy to men who are accustomed to use no better plough than the point of a crooked stick, with natural forks for handles.

Much might be said on the beneficial results of the Reformation, as it has laid the foundation of civil and religious liberty. Popery is essentially a system of bondage. The priest professing to have the keys of the eternal world, and the destiny of immortal souls in their hands, wields a terrific power over his deluded victims, a power from which the highest angel would shrink under a sense of incompetency. But the blind votary of Rome, taught from infancy assuredly to believe in this power, like the veriest slave, prostrates himself at the feet of him who can save or destroy. He must do as he is directed, speak as directed, and