

IRISH PROTESTANTS

AND THE

UNIONIST LEADERS.



ON Wednesday, November 14, 1888, the Prime Minister and the Marquis of Hartington were entertained at a banquet in the Hôtel Métropole by the Nonconformist Unionist Association, the occasion being the presentation to their lordships of an address from Irish Nonconformist ministers. Sir George H. Chubb, Vice-President of the Association, occupied the chair; and the others present, besides the two distinguished guests, included the Moderator of the General Assembly of the Irish Presbyterian Church, Rev. R. J. Lynd, Belfast; Rev. Dr Evans, Methodist Church, Waterford; Rev. H. D. Bennett, Congregational Church, Sligo; Rev. A. M'Caig, Baptist Church, Brannoxtown, Co. Kildare; Rev. J. H. Orr, Antrim; Rev. J. S. Cregan, Belfast; Viscount Wolmer, M.P., Petersfield Div., Hampshire; Sir J. Corry, M.P., Belfast; Sir H. Cartwright, London; Mr J. H. Cooke, Winsford; Mr J. Corbett, M.P., Droitwich; Mr T. Winslow, Q.C. (Hon. Treasurer of the N.U.A.), London; Dr Ball (Hon. Sec. N.U.A.), London; Sir H. Havelock-Allan, M.P., Durham; Sir Joseph Lee, Manchester; Sir H. Mitchell, Bradford; Sir G. Bruce, London; Mr T. W. Russell, M.P., Tyrone; Mr J. Sykes Rymer, York; Mr T. Lea, M.P., Derry; Mr Mark Stewart, M.P., Kirkcudbright; Colonel Arthur, Clapham; Mr Sinclair, M.P., Falkirk; Mr Bompas, Q.C., London; Sir James D. Allport, Derby; Dr Collingwood Andrews, Hampstead; Mr J. Aldwinckle, London; Mr Alderman Acton, Nottingham; Mr John Bellows, Gloucester; Mr S. R. Bennett, London; Mr E. Bainbridge, Felton; Rev. J. Cumming Brown, Gunnersbury; Rev. J. Bond, Tottenham; Mr R. T. Broome, London; Mr

J. Broomhall, Surbiton; Mr John Bullough, Accrington; Mr H. Barnsley, Birmingham; Mr R. Chamberlain, M.P., Birmingham; Mr J. Collingham, Lincoln; Mr Jas. Calvert, London; Mr T. B. Carrington, London; Mr J. Clapham, London; Mr Thos. Cole, jun., Sheffield; Mr R. S. Cunningham, Totteridge Green; Mr E. M. Denny, London; Mr R. Davis, J.P., Wandsworth; Mr T. C. Dickie, Tyrone; Mr Charles Early, Witney; Mr W. Edmunds, J.P., Banbury; Mr W. Edwards, Tunbridge Wells; Rev. W. A. Essery, London; Dr A. Forsythe, London; Mr W. Fowler, London; Sir Julian Goldsmid, Bart., M.P., London; Mr H. Gwyther, London; Mr Albert Groser, Stroud Green; Mr A. Gunn, London; Mr J. Holden, J.P., Folkestone; Mr J. F. Haworth, Manchester; Mr R. Horner, Harrogate; Mr T. Hodgkin, D.C.L., Newcastle; Mr J. H. Hall, Bromley; Mr F. J. Hughes, Bromley; Mr R. Humphrey, Edinburgh; Dr T. F. Higgs, J.P., Dudley; Mr W. W. Howard, London; Captain H. Hart, Stamford; Mr J. B. Ingle, Blackheath; Mr J. W. Jepps, Clapham; Mr W. Johnson, London; Mr J. W. Keynes, Cambridge; Mr E. J. Leveson, Brockley; Mr H. S. Leonard, London; Mr Councillor Mark, Manchester; Mr F. W. Mawe, Chislehurst; Mr D. M'Laren, Putney; Mr A. G. Mitchie, Putney; Mr W. T. Ogden, London; Mr W. A. Osborne, Bristol; Mr H. D. Pochin, J.P., D.L., Conway; Mr J. R. Paton, Liverpool; Mr E. Prest, Sutton; Mr Alderman Peace, J.P., Bridgwater; Mr Alderman J. Pillman, Plymouth; Mr Geo. Phillips, Plymouth; Rev. C. J. Palmer, Devonport; Mr C. W. Robertson, London; Mr Talbot Reed, London; Mr E. Rawlings, Wimbledon; Mr Jas. Saunders, Wolverhampton; Mr T. Storrar-Smith, Clapton; Mr G. Mence Smith, London; Mr T. S. Scarborough, J.P., Halifax; Mr A. G. Snelgrove, Wandsworth; Mr A. Seth Smith, London; Mr E. J. Smith, Birmingham; Rev. F. Stephens, Birmingham; Mr W. W. Tasker, Hull; Mr J. Templeton, F.R.G.S., London; Mr W. Tillie, J.P., D.L., London; Rev. J. R. Thomson, M.A., Finchley; Mr Thos. Tanner, Gravesend; Mr Wickham Tozer, Ipswich; Mr B. Whitworth, Hampstead; Mr C. J. Wainwright, Finchley; Rev. A. Wilson, B.A., Bristol; Rev. W. L. Watkinson, Harrogate; Mr Powell Williams, M.P., Birmingham; Mr Wm. Vanner, Chislehurst; Mr H. T. Vanner, Clapton; Rev. J. D. Kewer Williams, Hackney; Mr H. G. Walker, Dudley; and Mr John Webster, Chislehurst. The banquet was held in the Whitehall Rooms, which were specially decorated for the occasion. Over the chair were the harp and crown, and underneath these symbols, *Tria Juncta in Uno*; *Quis Separabit?* and, facing the chair, *Libertas in Legibus*.

After the toast of "The Queen" had been duly honoured,

Dr BALL, Hon. Secretary of the Union, announced that the following letter had been received from Mr J. H. Barber, J.P., of Sheffield:—

"As a Unionist member of the Society of Friends, I very much

regret I cannot be at the banquet on the 14th of November. I am greatly

Opposed to coercion—

that coercion which prevents a law-abiding citizen in Ireland from enjoying the rights and liberty which his English fellow-subjects are privileged to possess. As a decided Liberal, I protest against the tyranny of an autocratic monarch, or an irresponsible secret conclave. I claim for my Irish brethren the right to let their land for reasonable rents—to become tenants in lawful sort without fear of maltreatment to themselves, their families, or their cattle. I claim for them that they shall be permitted to do all things that the laws of a free Parliament, elected by household suffrage, permit, without being placed under the ban of a tyrannical conspiracy, and deprived of the right to buy, sell, or act as citizens protected by the State, while they do no legal wrong. I feel that

Morality is not geographical—

(cheers)—that what is morally right in England is so in Ireland. I believe that, so far from Ireland being cursed by union with Great Britain, no greater calamity could happen to Ireland than severance from a State whose utmost wish it is to make Irishmen happy, prosperous, and free, and whose patience no amount of abuse can destroy. I have held those views for fifty years. (Hear, hear.) I cannot renounce them at the bidding of a man who has taught me them—(loud cheers)—in the most eloquent language, and whose every speech is best answered by some other of his own." (Laughter and cheers.)

Letters were also read from the Rev. W. H. Dallinger, D.D., F.R.S.; the Rev. Clement Clemence, D.D.; the Rev. Arthur Mursell, of Clapham; the Rev. Richard Roberts, ex-President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference; the Rev. T. M'Cullagh, ex-President of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference; and the Rev. Verner M. White.

Letters had also been received from the following ministers and gentlemen:—Newman Hall, J. Hiles Hitchens, D.D.; Dr Stoughton, D. A. Herschell, D.D.; James Billington, F. W. Brown; Charles Graham, H. Livesey, P. Prescott, D. W. Samways, J. R. Wood, Sir Archibald Orr-Ewing, M.P.; Messrs H. J. Atkinson, M.P.; E. S. W. de Cobain, M.P.; W. S. Caine, M.P.; R. T. O'Neill, M.P.; A. W. W. Dale, LL.D., of Cambridge; Alderman Hopkinson, J.P.; Henry Lightbown, J.P.; Josiah Tildesley, J.P.; H. Leachman, J.P.; F. F. Rigg, M.A., of Southport; T. G. Osborn, M.A.; W. Parkin, G. Hazley, R. A. Armitage, C. J. Angus, F. Audsley, T. Elson, Albert Stead, J. H. Turner, J. G. Davis, E. Waterman, W. R. Butters, and many others, including the Rev. E. K. Brown, who, on

behalf of himself and the Nonconformist Unionists of Great Yarmouth, expressed an earnest wish for the success of the meeting. There were also letters from English Nonconformists who desired to sign an address similar to the one to be presented. (Cheers.)

The CHAIRMAN, in introducing the deputation, said:—I am afraid that neither as regards nationality nor experience am I best qualified to preside over so important an assembly as this. There was one who, had his life been spared, would have been peculiarly fitted to occupy this position,—one who was beloved by all who knew him, and was outspoken in his denunciation of whatever would injure his native land,—I allude to the late Sir W. M'Arthur. (Hear, hear.) But as the kindness of the committee has placed me in the chair, it is my duty to say a few words respecting the

Nonconformist Unionist Association,

before introducing the Irish ministers who have come over to present an address to our noble guests. The Association was formed in self-defence—(hear, hear)—as a reply to the repeated insinuations of the Separatist party to the effect that Nonconformists were necessarily Gladstonites. (“No.”) A friend recently remarked that the formation of the Association was “welcome, though late.” But its lateness arises partly from the fact that there was a natural, and I think justifiable, reluctance to add to the number of existing political societies, and also because there was a desire not to accentuate differences among Nonconformists. (Hear, hear.) When, however, we found an

Organised attempt to graft the last Gladstonian doctrine upon Nonconformity,

we felt it was a necessity to form this Nonconformist Unionist Association, and so prove to the world that many Nonconformists care more for the welfare of their country and their Irish fellow-subjects than for the interests of sect or party. (Loud cheers.) I do not think we need fear the organised Separatist attempt to which I refer; it resulted in the presentation to Mr Gladstone last May of a Home Rule document, signed by only about one quarter of the Nonconformist ministers of Great Britain, while the address now to be offered to the united heads of the Unionist party has received out of the 990 Nonconformist ministers throughout Ireland the signatures of no less than 864. (Cheers.) It may be unusual for the ministers of Nonconformist Churches to unitedly express their opinion on a semi-political question; but the whole situation is unusual. When a political demand is made, which, if acceded to,

would, in the opinion of those best qualified to judge, result in social revolution and national disaster, surely it is time for trusted teachers of the people to speak out. There have been notable instances in the past history of this country when Churchmen and Nonconformists—in spite of ecclesiastical differences—have joined in meeting a common danger; and the members of our newly formed Association will loyally join their fellow-countrymen in opposing all that promotes disunion and antagonism of race and creed. (Cheers.) We believe

**A large and increasing number of Nonconformists
agree with us,—**

a minority, it may be, at present, but a minority supported by such eminent ministers as the Revs. Charles Spurgeon, Dr Allon, Dr Dale, Dr Stoughton, Dr White, Dr Bruce, the Rev. Wm. Arthur, and many others. (Cheers.) Join such men with the compact body of intelligent Irishmen who this evening publicly protest against this dangerous Home Rule scheme, and surely the warmest partisan of that movement will begin to wonder if there is not more certain evil than possible good in Mr Gladstone's new Irish policy. The *Times* recently said—

**“If the nation is fully informed on the subject of Ireland,
it will come to a sound conclusion.”**

I think we fully agree with this opinion, and we are here to-night to gain and spread some information, and to express our earnest desire to retain for our fellow-subjects the civil and religious liberties now enjoyed. (Cheers.) It is with the greatest possible pleasure we welcome as our guest the noble marquis at the head of Her Majesty's Government—(cheers)—whose wisdom, and firmness, and prudence have indeed fitted him for his exalted and responsible position. We extend an equally hearty welcome to the Marquis of Hartington—(cheers)—whose patriotism and fidelity to conscientious conviction at this trying period will ever be gratefully remembered by his countrymen. (Hear, hear.) And now I beg to introduce to your lordships the

Irish deputation,

consisting of the Rev. Mr Lynd, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland; the Rev. Dr Evans, of the Methodist Church of Ireland; the Rev. J. S. Cregan and the Rev. H. E. Bennett, of the Congregational Church of Ireland; the Rev. A. M'Caig, of the Baptist Church of Ireland; and the Rev. Dr Orr, of the Presbyterian Church of Ireland. (Loud cheers.)

The following address to the Most Hon. the Marquis of Salisbury, K.G., P.C., and to the Right Hon. the Marquis of Hartington, P.C., was then presented by the Rev. Mr Lynd on behalf of the deputation :—

“We, the undersigned Ministers of the Presbyterian, Methodist, Congregationalist, and Baptist Churches in Ireland, have seen with great regret the presentation of an address to Mr Gladstone signed by a considerable number of Nonconformist ministers in England and Wales, in favour of a scheme of Home Rule for Ireland. We hold that the opinion of their brethren living in Ireland is entitled to far more weight than an expression of opinion from men who, however good their intentions, have little or no personal knowledge of the state of things in Ireland. (Cheers.)

“We deprecate in the strongest manner, as disastrous to the best interests of the country, a separate Parliament for Ireland, or any legislation tending to imperil the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland, or to interfere with the unity and the supremacy of the Imperial Parliament. We do not believe that any guarantees, moral or material, could be devised which would safeguard the rights of minorities scattered throughout Ireland against the encroachments of a majority vested with legislative and executive functions.

“While acknowledging that in the past large sections of the Irish people have suffered many wrongs, we believe there are no grievances removable by legislation which cannot be removed by the Imperial Parliament; while the establishment of a separate Parliament for Ireland would most seriously aggravate many existing evils, and would produce other evils greater than any that at present exist.

“We especially claim the aid of our co-religionists in Great Britain in resisting strenuously any such policy, believing that it would deprive us of our rights of citizenship in this great Empire.”

The Rev. MODERATOR, after presenting the address, said :—

Although the address I have just read is represented as coming from Nonconformist ministers, there are really no Nonconformists in Ireland. Non-episcopal would probably be the more accurate representation; but by whatever name we are designated, we stand

Shoulder to shoulder with united hearts and unshakable resolve

to resist and repel the common danger with which we are threatened in the shape of Parnellite Home Rule. (Cheers.) The significance of our address is emphasised by the fact that until Mr Gladstone abandoned the Liberalism of the greater part of his political life, at least ninety-five per cent. of the ministers of my own Church were the right hon. gentleman's most ardent and devoted adherents, and I believe the same to be true of the other Churches represented here. Indeed, out of the 600 Presbyterian ministers, I question whether there could have been found more than a dozen who were not supporters of Mr Gladstone's policy. At the present moment our attachment to Liberal principles is as strong as ever.

We have not surrendered our Liberalism,

but Mr Gladstone has marched with colours flying into the Parnellite camp, and put himself at the head of the Parnellite forces, and we have declined to follow him. (Cheers.) I beg further to say that this address is presented in no spirit of hostility to our Roman Catholic countrymen. (Cheers.) So far as the present agitation has been carried on, despite the wild oratory to which it has given rise on the other side, it has been markedly free on our side from anything which can give it the aspect of a religious crusade. Indeed we find ourselves at one

With all that is most independent and intelligent among Roman Catholics themselves ;

and though we deprecate Mr Gladstone's policy—that is, the policy we suspect he has (laughter)—as tending to place perilous power in the hands of the Roman hierarchy—still, we desire, as we have always done, that Roman Catholics in Ireland may enjoy, as indeed they do, equal civil rights and privileges with ourselves. Certainly our address indicates no lack of interest in the land question or hostility to the interests of tenant-farmers. Indeed I believe that the land question lies at the root of the present discontent. (Cheers.) If it be solved, the present agitation will lose all its pith and force. (Cheers.) It would be a shame for us were we indifferent to the condition of the farming population.

Many of us, myself among the number, are sons of tenant-farmers.

Our ministers are among the first to advocate the farmers' claims. When tenants were altogether in their landlords' power, and when

few of them were qualified to take a platform, and almost all of them were afraid, many of the ministers of my Church were among the foremost to advocate their claims, and to expose themselves to much obloquy by so doing. (Cheers.) The tenant-right agitation began in the north; there the tenants' claims were formulated, and it was only when Parnellism discovered that it would be powerless without using the land question as a fulcrum, that it cast the weight of its influence on the tenant-farmers' side. (Cheers.) Though our address is signed by an overwhelming majority of the ministers of our Church, I admit that it is not signed by all. We have a number of ministers who, for very sufficient reasons, decline to take any part in political movements of a party character—some who object to take part in any. I strongly sympathise with the motives of these brethren. Until Mr Gladstone sprang his Parnellite policy on the nation, I never stood on a party platform, and if I believed that that question was one of party, most decidedly I should still pursue the same course. Some names are wanting on that ground, not because those who hold those views have any sympathy with Gladstonian policy. Others have not attached their signatures lest it might interfere with their usefulness in the south and west of Ireland, who are yet in full accord with us. A few fear that by signing the address, encouragement may be given to lay an arrest on further Liberal legislation on the land and other questions. With all those reasons we can more or less sympathise, but I am here to affirm that, so far as I am aware, there are

Not more than four,

or, at the very furthest, half-a-dozen, of our ministers who advocate or support Mr Gladstone's policy of a separate Parliament and Executive for Ireland. (Cheers.) And though those brethren who differ from us have a perfect right to hold their own views, they are in no sense representative, and I believe I am within the mark when I say they do not form more than one per cent. of our ministry. (Cheers.) At two successive assemblies, one of them called for the special consideration of this question, and a series of resolutions opposing Mr Gladstone's policy was adopted unanimously. (Cheers.) The practical unanimity of our 600 ministers is fairly representative of that of our laity. (Cheers.) Our Church numbers, within a fraction, half a million. In a district, for instance, containing 500 or 600 people, we can find one or two farmers who say that they are Home Rulers, but Home Rule with them simply means cheap land. They have an idea that the Parnellites will give them that, and they are prepared to accept that under any rule, though it be that of the Czar of all the Russias. ("Hear, hear," and laughter.) But the numbers of such are very few indeed.

Our Presbyterian Church, as a whole, is through and through sound on this question.

(Cheers.) No body of men has been ever more united, or more resolute to oppose with all their energy and with all the justifiable means at their disposal the fatal and, for Ireland, most ruinous policy of Home Rule. (Cheers.) My Nonconformist brethren have the same story to tell as I have; and then there is the Episcopalian Church, numbering almost 700,000, who are as resolute and unanimous, I believe, as we are in our hostility. (Cheers.) Besides, we have 700,000 or 800,000 of the very cream of the Roman Catholic population, representing almost all the education outside the priesthood, and all the wealth and most of the higher intelligence of the Roman Catholic Church, who are at one with us in our opposition. (Cheers.) You may ask,

What of the Protestant Home Rule Association?

The only power I am cognisant that it possesses is the power of drawing letters of congratulation from Mr Gladstone which are paraded over the land. (Laughter.) But as to any numerical or political power it can claim, that is outside the measurement of ordinary mortals. Some men call themselves Protestant Home Rulers who are Protestant simply because they are not Roman Catholics. They are not in membership with any Protestant Church, and are no strength to Protestantism in any sense. Then we have a few who imagine that Mr Gladstone's may still be the winning side, and who hope to reap their reward when the good time comes; and others who, if they are not Home Rulers, will never be known to be anything. (Laughter, and "Hear, hear.") These, with a few sincere believers in Home Rule who are genuine Protestants, constitute the Protestant Home Rule Association, which I am persuaded is not growing, nor likely to grow. (Cheers.) Whatever other delusions the Nationalists of Great Britain may cherish, do not let yourselves think for a moment that the Protestant Home Rule Association is a power in Ireland. (Cheers.) It is from no lack of patriotism that we are opposed to the Nationalist policy.

We love our native land—

(cheers)—and feel a profound interest in all that concerns her wellbeing. Could we be convinced that the Gladstonian policy would regenerate and elevate Ireland, we should adopt and support

it enthusiastically ; but it is just because we are persuaded in our inmost hearts that it will throw back our country a hundred years in civilisation, and be destructive of her best interests all round, that, with much reluctance, we have made our present stand. (Cheers.) Mr Gladstone tries to discount any influence our statements may have, by saying that the opinion of eighty-five representatives is of more weight than ours can be. Ours is disinterested, at any rate. We gain nothing by the course we have adopted. Can the same be said for Mr Gladstone's Parnellite following? How many of them dare call their minds their own? (Cheers.) Then I have no hesitation in asserting that we possess much more reliable knowledge of Ireland and Irish affairs than Mr Gladstone and his whole Parnellite following ; and certainly we have both a deeper interest and a fuller acquaintance with Irish affairs than our English Non-conformist brethren who have assumed an attitude of hostility to the cause of Unionism. (Cheers.)

We object to both the men and the methods of the Separation party in Ireland,

and we have no idea of putting the prosperity and wealth and the educational affairs of Ireland at the disposal of men who have never shown themselves to be capable of managing anything but an agitation which again and again has refused to be bound by the trammels of law. To set law-breakers at the head of affairs and make them law-makers, would be the height of suicidal folly. (Cheers.) Besides, if we grant Home Rule, so called, to-morrow, we shall be as far from settling the Irish question as ever. Those who know the country know that the real vitality of the movement means much more. We must look for it in the Gaelic and other kindred associations. The American and Irish Home Rulers who have any heart in the movement will never be satisfied with anything short of complete independence for Ireland. And, worst of all, there looms up before us the probability—I had almost said the certainty—of civil war, should Mr Gladstone's policy receive the sanction of the constituencies of the three kingdoms. (Cheers.) I have made careful inquiries in passing from place to place in connection with my official duties, and everywhere in the North I find the same deep-seated impression that civil war must ensue should Mr Gladstone have his way. I say nothing of the right or wrong of this ; I simply state a fact, and I ask, is it not madness, not for Ireland only, but for the Empire, to risk this? (Cheers.) With a Parliament that cannot be strictly called democratic, we have disestablished the Church, taken the tithes out of the way, and given measure after measure of tenant-right, until we have now, I believe,

The best land laws of any country in Europe,

though they are still capable of improvement. We have given a national system of education in both the lower and higher departments, which in time will produce splendid results. Shall we now, when every householder and lodger almost has been admitted to the franchise, risk all the good that has been accomplished, and plunge our country into the throes of civil strife, or at least of a coercion which will be a disgrace to England and destruction to us,—

For it will be coercion for loyalty to the Crown and to Union with Great Britain?

(Cheers.) At present there is no coercion but for crime,—for breaches of the law which are equally punishable in England. (Cheers.) It seems ominous to us to find the teachers of religion sympathising with those who break the law of the land, when we have a democratic Parliament to appeal to for its repeal if it be unjust. (Cheers.) Mr Gladstone and his supporters seem to us to be demoralising the principles of the community by the doctrines they are teaching. Boycotting is “exclusive dealing.” The Plan of Campaign is the weapon of the weak against the strong. The maiming and wounding of dumb brutes in the most atrocious manner is the injudicious method of protesting against a policy which is not approved. For policemen at Michelstown to shoot any one is monstrous, but for policemen in Belfast to shoot many more is not worthy the slightest notice save in way of approval. (Cheers.)

Where is this to end?

Is opposition to Mr Gladstone's policy immoral, and are the most ordinary laws of morality to be ignored “in those whom he takes under his wing”? I wish I could appeal to our Nonconformist brethren who would force Home Rule upon us. We do want Home Rule of a sort—that is, we want local government safely guarded, as the people of England and Scotland will have it. We want every privilege we can get for ourselves; but we still proclaim our resolve to adhere to the Union. (Cheers.) If Home Rule comes, then we must bid farewell to the system of united secular and separate religious instruction to which we have been always true. We shall then have the Romish Church endowed, not directly but indirectly, through its educational institutions, which will be virtually teachers of the Romish religion. We shall have the prosperity of the North taxed to support the poverty of the South. Trade and

commerce and capital will be driven from the island, and, worse than all, the alienation and strife of centuries will be reawakened, with what result God alone can tell. (Cheers.) Mr Gladstone would fain see us return to what he, with very limited knowledge on the subject, calls the principles of our fathers. I most respectfully tell Mr Gladstone that he is doing his best, by the persistent pursuit of his present policy, to goad a peaceful and industrious population into rebellion were there the slightest probability that his policy will be successful. (Hear, hear.)

There was a time

when, if our fellow-Christians of the same faith were exposed to danger in any land, the hearts of Englishmen went out to them, and help did not lag far behind. So was it in the Netherlands, so was it in France; and we in Ireland venture to hope that the time is not far distant when the eyes of our Nonconformist brethren in this land and the eyes of our Presbyterian brethren in Scotland will be opened, and their hearts touched with fraternal sympathy for those who cannot look upon the policy they now support without dismay. But should we be disappointed, then, putting our trust in that God who has never yet forsaken us, we shall keep the stand which we have taken, and nothing but the whole force of the nation will drive us from it. (Cheers.) We feel profoundly grateful for the noble services of Lord Salisbury and Lord Hartington in the cause of Union. (Cheers.)

The Rev. Dr Evans,*

speaking on behalf of the Methodist Church, said:—My Lords, strictly speaking, there is neither Conformity nor Nonconformity now in Ireland. All Churches there are equal in the eye of the law, and all stand on like voluntary relations to the people of the country. But whilst this is so, the Churches whose ministers to-night address your lordships correspond to Churches in England that are Nonconformist—the Irish and the English Churches being one in doctrine and in polity, and one in the unity of an actually subsisting fellowship.

Addressing your lordships in the name of the Irish Nonconformist ministers, I feel it due to my brethren to remember their sacred office, and in anything I may say about portions of our countrymen, to express it under the influence of charity, and in

* No adequate report appears in the daily papers of Dr Evans's speech. We are, however, enabled, by Dr Evans's courtesy, to print his remarks in a fuller form than the exigencies of their delivery at the meeting permitted of.

such a spirit as befits the pastoral office. We owe one another many things—we owe our brethren in England, as well as those from whom we totally differ in Ireland, kindness, charity, forbearance, and courtesy; but above everything else we owe one another truth. There is nothing, seemingly, so hard to get, and there is nothing pertaining to the Irish question so important.

The truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,

would shatter to atoms the fabrications, the party inventions, the selfish strategy, the plausible sophistry, the inexhaustible impudence, by which the Home Rule imposture is promoted. It is solely in the interests of truth, and not the interests of party, that the Irish ministers present this address. In so doing it is not a compliment to parties but a tribute to patriotism that we pay. Face to face, and day by day, we see all that is dear to us as citizens dangerously imperilled; we see falsehood sapping the foundations of truth, we see the sorceries of selfishness prevailing over honour, we see an organisation begotten in sedition and nursed in blood, extending its baleful influence to your country, and there, as well as in Ireland, fast tending to efface the eternal distinctions between right and wrong. My Lords, in view of such evils

We cannot remain silent.

It is to witness against them, it is to uphold your patriotic hands in the righteous effort you are making to throttle the impious immorality that menaces at once the civil and religious wellbeing of England and Ireland, that Christian ministers in Ireland have presented this address. That the public may appreciate its weight, I may mention on behalf of the Methodist Church, to which I have the honour to belong, that it is signed by the

Overwhelming majority of the Methodist Conference.

It is signed by our Vice-President, who is our highest officer in Ireland, the President being an Englishman and resident in England; it is signed by the Secretary of our Conference, and by all the Chairmen of Districts. For our ecclesiastical purposes Ireland is divided into districts, such as the Dublin District, the Waterford District, the Cork District, the Limerick District, and so on. The Chairmen of these Districts have very responsible duties intrusted to them, and every one of these Chairmen has signed this address. We have two Colleges in Ireland doing a great educational work in the country—one in Dublin and one in Belfast. The Presidents of these two Colleges have signed the address. Besides, I should mention that of the body known as the Legal Hundred, in whose hands the legal

keeping of our interests is placed—of that Legal Hundred a fixed proportion belongs to Ireland, and every member of the Legal Hundred resident in Ireland has signed the address. Vice-president, chairmen of districts, presidents of our colleges, members of the Legal Hundred, and the overwhelming majority of our ministers—signed by these the address represents the closely knit unity of our body, and the increasingly strong and conscientious conviction with which

We abjure “Home Rule.”

The few ministers who have not signed, for the most part fully agree with their brethren, hold opinions just as strongly opposed to Home Rule as they, and the proofs of this are in my possession under their own hands; but for reasons, partly prudential and partly arising out of the devotion they owe to their sacred office, they prefer to remain in private. Nor is this the first time the Methodist Church in Ireland has spoken out against the baleful attempts of the agitators and leaguers to usurp the government of Ireland. In January 1886, the Committee of Privileges, which represents the Conference on all public questions affecting the interests of the body, said this:—

“That in our deliberate and solemn conviction there is nothing in the history or necessities of this country which requires the establishment of a separate Legislature; that any measure which would even tend towards a dissolution of the Legislative Union of Great Britain would be highly prejudicial both to the moral and material interests of Ireland; and that its immediate effect would be to increase rather than to diminish the animosities that unhappily distract the country. That, in common with all lovers of social order, we deplore and deprecate the spirit of lawlessness which has been fostered by unscrupulous agitation, leading to intimidation and violence, detrimental both to the secular weal and demoralising to the national character, and most of all injurious to the maintenance and spread of the great work of the Churches of Christ in the land.”

And, my Lords, still further. A year ago the

Irish Methodist Conference,

in its annual address to the English Conference, said:—

“In the present crisis through which our country and yours is passing, affecting, as it must of necessity, our religious as well as temporal wellbeing, we claim your sympathy and prayers. Public feeling is with us in a state of extreme tension and suspense. If we could do so with a good conscience, we would fain leave all such

affairs of State to work out their own issues. But in a cause in which morality, liberty, and the social as well as religious welfare of the people are so deeply and hazardously involved, it was not possible for us to stand by as idle spectators and be blameless. In similar times our fathers did not do so. In common with all the Evangelical Churches of this land, and in pursuance of several official and public declarations made again and again by our Conference, our Committee of Privileges has during the past year, in addresses to the Executive and petitions to Parliament, stated that in their judgment nothing should be done to weaken or invalidate the Legislative Union between Great Britain and Ireland.

In 1802 your fathers challenged our loyalty to a united Methodism

by referring to 'the new and glorious compact' by which the British Isles had just been united. We hold you to that challenge. And we submit that, in the light of the past history of our work in Ireland, our claim both to know truly and to love well our country should not go for naught."

What the English Conference of 1802 asked us to do we have faithfully done. They called upon us in Ireland to be faithful to the Union, and faithful we have been; and now in our turn, after eighty years of spotless, unflinching fidelity,

We appeal to our brethren in England and Scotland

to be faithful, and call upon them in the name of all that binds us together to be true to their oft-asserted principles, to be true to the history of our Church, to be true to its loyal genius and law-abiding traditions, to be true to the words of their own annual addresses to the Irish Conference for eighty years, to be true to the Empire of England, and above all, and as embracing all, to be true to the trust they have received at the hands of our blessed Lord, and stand up in support of the Irish Connection, which now, in common with all the Protestant Christianity of Ireland, conjures England to set its heart as adamant against the attempt to put us and the other loyal inhabitants of the country—amounting to two millions—under a legislature which would simply be the National League in quintessence.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

Mr Gladstone at Bingley Hall

discourteously sneered at the signatories of this address, calling them "a handful of men in the North." He did not sneer at the address

of English Nonconformists to himself. That was sweet to him as angels' music; and but for the blind partisan character of that address I do not think the Irish ministers would have so strongly felt the need of their present action. They saw Mr Gladstone and their English brethren as "the blind leading the blind," with the inevitable result, if they succeeded, that they should "fall into the ditch," dragging us with them—and that "ditch" in Ireland would be the dirtiest into which religion and loyalty were ever dragged. Mr Gladstone calls us "a handful of men in the North"—such is his knowledge of Ireland!

The signatories to this address live all over Ireland,

and I am here to testify that the feeling of opposition to his insane policy of putting Ireland under a cabinet of rebels is, in the other provinces, much deeper, much stronger, is resented with a far keener intuition of realities, and a far more sensitive apprehension of consequences, than I ever found to obtain in Ulster. No! Our opposition to the proposed factory of thralldom is not what those who do not know better nickname "Orange bigotry." It is the resistance of Christian men to the proposed imposition of a yoke, such as neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear; and that resistance, if more silent, is, I repeat, deeper, and inwardly burns with a more ardent indignation, in the other Provinces than it does in Ulster. They, "a handful of men in the North"—what right have they to speak! As regards my own Church, my Lords, its right is that of a Body across whose shield the bar sinister has never been drawn—a Body on whose escutcheon there is not a blot—a Body whose Christian services and honourable citizenship history dares not challenge. Our right to be heard on behalf of our country is that of a Church among whose members there is the smallest amount of illiteracy—is that of a Church of whose members, I believe, there is

Not one in jail in all Ireland

—is that of a Church whose people are not in the "workhouse" or a burden to the rates. We neither manufacture criminals nor paupers, nor have we ever obliged the State to expend a sixpence to make us loyal. Our "local knowledge" tells us that Mr Gladstone cannot say the same of his Fenian *protégés* and Parnellite allies, out of whose "circles" and "branches" his proposed government of Ireland would be framed. Nor is our support to the Union due to any financial interest which we draw from it. We have no endowments, and never had. There is nothing in the way of office to purchase our allegiance.

Christianity and patriotism

alone inspire and dictate our loyalty to the Union, for under Imperial administration alone can the equilibrium and tranquil equipoise of rival interests be secured to Ireland. My Lords, I have been asked to indicate the hurt which a Parnellite Government would do to Ireland: It would inevitably put education under the priesthood; and I ask English Nonconformists how they would like that for themselves in England? English Nonconformists are making an outcry at this moment against proposed denominational education. How consistent they are! Would it be believed that Nonconformists in England bless Mr Gladstone with aid to inflict a curse on Ireland which they declare against being put upon themselves in England? Surely those who can act thus "put themselves out of court" on the question of Irish government. No wonder the Parnellite press in Ireland makes much of the English Nonconformists. The subjection of Ireland to a government such as is proposed would warn off enterprise and banish capital from the country. The harm in this respect would simply be incalculable. It would also drive away the Protestant people from a vast number of places, and would be the speedy extinction of our existence over vast areas. Merchants, traders, shopkeepers, and farmers have told me they could not live, and must inevitably leave the country in the event of separation. We cannot consent to a measure which would thus depopulate Ireland of its best citizens, that would leave our churches vacant monuments of the past, by bereaving us of our people and banishing them to other countries.

We wish our English brethren would allow themselves to see these things; we wish they might allow themselves to think what a

Sternly real force

it must be which, as by an act of omnipotence, has made Churches differing as Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Friends have done throughout their whole history, see and think as one on this proposal to put them under the authority of a government which must be the outgrowth of hereditary animosity, illiteracy, greed, and other worse elements of moral distemper. If the unanimity of conviction exemplified in this solidarity of belief of loyalists otherwise so widely differing has been achieved by a myth, then intellect itself must have suffered an inversion.

But, my Lords, before I conclude, let me testify to the

Vastness of the benefit which has accrued to Ireland

under the present Administration, but especially and emphatically under the administration of the present Chief Secretary. Mr Balfour's administration is the *fairest* as well as the firmest, the most evenly just as well as the most usefully continuous, that Ireland has seen since the Union. It is an excellent illustration of what imperial government can do, when patriotism prevails over party, and when the good of Ireland and not the exigencies of politicians is the inspiring motive.

Mr Balfour has done more for true freedom in Ireland than any of his predecessors.

The wrong-doers bespatter him as wrong-doers are wont; but thousands and tens of thousands of crushed and terrified children of Ireland bless him in the inmost sanctuary of their heart. Let the same policy of fairness and firmness go on unchecked; let such measures as may yet remain to be provided for Ireland's weal be diligently taken in hand, and the day is happily near when Ireland will be as loyal as Scotland, and the merits of her people be among the brightest jewels in the diadem of our United Empire.

The Rev. H. E. BENNETT, B.A., said:—

It is my honour to be

Chairman of the Congregational Union of Ireland,

but I am not here in that character, but rather to represent the opinion of Protestant non-Episcopalians in the West of Ireland. That opinion is strongly opposed to Home Rule, and is virtually unanimous. Speaking of Protestants generally in Sligo, we have five churches and one meeting-house; but, so far as I am aware, there is but

One Protestant,

and he an Episcopalian, who is in favour of Home Rule. All the rest are against it.

Mr Gladstone scorns the opinion of those whom he terms Irish Nonconformists, but we claim that we have a right to consideration, and that our opinion on a matter which so vitally concerns our own welfare, and the welfare of the land in which we live, should at least have equal weight with that of our brethren in England—and we think even more. And, as our opinion is held in conjunction with a more thorough knowledge of the state of affairs in Ireland than they can as a body reasonably lay claim to, we think we have good ground for asking them to hear what we have to say.

We are not naturally partisans of Irish landlords.

We have had no reason to be. The Nonconformist of Connaught has been no more agreeable to his Episcopalian landlord than the Nonconformist of Norfolk. The same measure of injustice has been inflicted upon him as upon the Roman Catholic, as a tenant-farmer. Nonconformists have been rack-rented; they have been evicted. There are even plenty of men who will tell you that Nonconformists have, in certain cases, suffered more than Roman Catholics. And this for two reasons: because they would not cringe as the Roman Catholic would, and they could be trusted not to send a bullet whizzing from behind a hedge at the oppressor.

But this condition of things is past.

The law relating to land is improved, and the power of any tyrannical agent or landlord is limited. Reforms are still needed, but not revolution, and

Home Rule is revolution.

By a considerable number of people in England, whatever we have to say against Home Rule is swept away by the one contemptuous word, "Orangeism." I should like to say that we are not Orangemen, and that we strongly deprecate anything which outrages the feelings or sentiments of our Roman Catholic fellow-countrymen, and when we are charged with desiring to maintain Protestant ascendancy we deny it utterly.

We are believers in religious equality.

We are glad that the laws which oppressed Roman Catholics are gone. We did not make them, and we are no more to be blamed for them than the present generation of men in England. They were the outcome of a spirit which pressed hard upon us as well as upon the Roman Catholics themselves—a spirit which, happily, is not so rampant to-day, but it has not wholly perished. But if any man thinks that it is only among the Protestants in Ireland that we have to guard against it, he certainly does not think wisely.

Reform is still needed,

but it will be more safely carried out by the British Parliament than by an Irish one. And one thing is absolutely certain, that so long as Ireland can send to Parliament a large body of energetic men who are wanted in any good cause, there cannot be much

danger, in the present democratic times, that their voice will be neglected.

I may say that personally, I am an Englishman and a Gladstonian from my boyhood, but that, while I may be mistaken, I am convinced that if my ministerial brethren in England had had the same experience and intimate acquaintance with Irish life and opinion that I have they would be, as I am,

Strongly on the Unionist side.

The Rev. A. M'CAIG said :—

Sir George Chubb, My Lords, and Gentlemen—

As representing the Baptists of Ireland,

I am glad to say that I heartily endorse all that has been so ably said by the gentlemen who have now addressed you. The Baptists of Ireland are not a large body—indeed, they are the smallest of those represented here to-night—but they are entirely in harmony with the rest of their Nonconformist brethren in this matter, and the address bears the signatures of nearly all our Baptist ministers, only two having refused to sign through opposition to its sentiments. I believe that the proportion of the members of our body in favour of Home Rule is much smaller than that of the ministers—

It is scarcely noticeable.

I am glad that some reference has been made to Protestant opinion in the South of Ireland, and I wish to add my testimony on that point. It has been repeatedly stated on English platforms by Mr Parnell and others, that while the Protestants in the North, where they are so numerous, are opposed to Home Rule and afraid of its consequences, the Protestants of the South and West, though few and scattered, have no such fear.

I give that statement an unqualified contradiction.

Living in the County of Kildare, I have had many opportunities of ascertaining the Protestant opinion of that county and the neighbouring counties of Dublin and Wicklow; and I have also made inquiries of friends well acquainted with the state of feeling in other counties, and I am prepared to state most emphatically that the Protestants of the South are as strenuously opposed to the policy of Home Rule, and as much afraid of its consequences, as their brethren in the North can be. They may not have expressed their feelings so loudly as others, but that has largely been owing

to their isolated condition, and to the fact that, surrounded as they are by those who clamour so much for freedom, they have scarcely been free to express their opinion.

We Baptists have some old-fashioned ideas which keep us from approving of this Home Rule movement. When we see that in connection with it

Not only the laws of men but those of God

are set at defiance, we do not feel attracted towards it. I may mention particularly the fact that it has constantly been attended by the

Wholesale desecration of the Lord's Day.

When we see that Sunday is the great day for League meetings; that members of Parliament choose that day for displaying their oratorical powers, with the accompaniment of bands playing political and party tunes—often to the annoyance and disturbance of worshipping Protestants—we think we may be excused for considering that a movement so signalised cannot be conspicuous for righteousness.

The disloyalty

that has marked the movement is another reason why we hold aloof from it. It is all very well for our friends in England to express their belief in the loyalty of the Home Rulers, but we in Ireland fail to see the evidence of it. We could understand the strongest opposition to any particular Government as consistent with loyalty to the Crown, but we cannot so understand the treatment accorded to the name of Her Gracious Majesty. And have we not been told by Mr Dillon and others, who ought to know, that the present movement is a continuation of the rebellious movements of the past? We shall be more inclined to believe the protestations of loyalty sometimes made by some Nationalists when we find that their bands are as fond of playing "God save the Queen" as "God save Ireland," and when at their public gatherings and banquets the sentiment of the National Anthem is as conspicuously honoured as it is now ostentatiously ignored.

But our English Nonconformist friends ask us how we can support a Government that has passed and is enforcing a Coercion Act to the subversion of the liberty of the subject? We might answer that by asking how our friends, without any qualms of conscience, supported the Government of Mr Gladstone in the Coercive legislation of the past; but we rather answer that the

**So-called "Coercion Act" causes us no inconvenience
whatever.**

We have never found that from the present Act, nor even from the more stringent Acts of Mr Gladstone's Government, any trouble has come to the law-abiding citizen, and we are simple enough to agree with the Old Book that rulers should be "a terror to evil-doers and a praise to them that do well." "Yes," but our friends say, "though *you* may be let alone, how horribly these poor Nationalists are treated! No freedom of speech! No liberty of the press!" Now we who live in Ireland, and who know what floods of rhetoric are constantly being poured forth from platform and press, fail to see that there is a lack of freedom in this respect. We see that the only liberty denied

Is a liberty which no Nonconformist desires ;

liberty to denounce his neighbours ; liberty to stir up strife ; liberty to incite men to break the law. These laws, they may say, are bad laws. We do not think so, but if they are, we submit that it is not the part of members of Parliament and others to break them, but to use constitutional means for altering them.

We are laughed at for our fears of religious intolerance on the part of the Roman Catholics, should they get the upper hand through Home Rule. Mr Gladstone taunts us with stirring up the fires of religious bigotry, &c. Now we have in our address expressed fears of other than religious disabilities, but undoubtedly the religious question is an important one with us. We assure Mr Gladstone, however, that Nonconformists in Ireland have done much to allay the bitterness of religious strife ; and it is no stirring up of that strife to express our opinions on the subject.

We are continually being told that Home Rule would be the "making of the Irish nation." Mr Gladstone in his "Homer" has told us that "the first factor in the making of a nation is its religion," and certainly it is utterly impossible to divest the Irish question of its religious aspect.

**We see a close alliance between the Parnellites and
the priests.**

There are various ways of accounting for it, but there is the fact, and we have every reason to believe that if Home Rule should ever become a reality the priestly allies of the Home Rulers would come in for their reward. The known character of the Roman Catholic system so well depicted in Mr Gladstone's "Vatican Decrees" is enough to warrant us having some little fear of the result. Let it be clearly understood, however, that we have no desire for a

Protestant ascendancy, while we claim the right to object to a Roman Catholic ascendancy. At present we have absolute religious equality, and we have what our brethren in Scotland and England desire, and what we hope they will yet obtain—Disestablishment.

In this connection let me say that we have been interested of late in watching the movement among the Nonconformists of England in opposition to any clerical control of the educational system. We sympathise with them in their feelings, but we cannot understand their consistency in wishing to place our educational system, with which Nonconformists at least are well satisfied, into the hands of the Roman Catholic hierarchy. *That*, it is well known, would be one of the first results of Home Rule. Yes, my Lords, we *are* apprehensive of the consequences of Home Rule,

Both religiously and politically ;

and is it any wonder when, in spite of the fair words spoken in England, we have been warned by the leaders in Ireland that their day of triumph will be a day of retribution upon all who have dared to take the opposite side! and it has not been an uncommon thing for humble Protestants in country districts to be told by their Nationalist neighbours that Home Rule would mean their expulsion from the country.

Did time permit, I might allude to the

Land Question.

There can be no doubt that Home Rule is popular with many simply because of the hopes it holds out with regard to the land, and it is a significant fact that throughout the agitation so very little has been said in Ireland itself about Home Rule—the Plan of Campaign, rack-renting, land-grabbing, and kindred subjects have been the topics upon which the orators have dilated.

Our address affirms our belief that grievances capable of being remedied by legislation may be best remedied by the Imperial Parliament, but we believe there are some grievances connected with the land that cannot be remedied by legislation, but rather by honest industry on the part of the people, and by the fostering of kindly feelings between landlord and tenant ; but I need not tell you that the

National League has been no help in these directions.

Legislation has already placed the tenant in a position vastly more privileged than his Scotch or English compeers ; and, while we sympathise with tenants in real distress, we confess that our feelings

are not so easily moved by the harrowing descriptions in which Nationalist orators delight, when

We know for a fact that many who have refused to pay their rents have been perfectly well able to do so.

not a few confessing that they had the money, but were afraid to pay; others who have refused publicly have paid privately, some even declining to compromise themselves by a receipt. There may be found hard cases of "rack-renting," though that is less likely now that the machinery of the Land Courts is in operation, but there is another side; for instance, a farmer very recently went into the Land Court, obtained a reduction and a judicial lease, and at once he turns round and lets half of his farm, and for that half charges as much rent as he pays to the landlord for the whole! That is rack-renting for you!

In conclusion, let me say that we Baptists claim to be faithful to the

Glorious traditions of Nonconformity

concerning civil and religious liberty; we are none the less so because at this crisis we are constrained to arrange ourselves on the side of those with whom we have formerly differed; when we see them standing forth as the guardians of law and order. We grieve to have to oppose Mr Gladstone, whom we had long admired, but we are glad to find ourselves in the company of such tried Liberals as Lord Hartington, John Bright, and Joseph Chamberlain. We feel it to be our duty to pray that the present Unionist Government may long exist, and that it may be endowed with wisdom to devise, and courage to execute, whatever may be for the highest welfare of the Empire.