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The Association of Friends in the Church in 1833— Its Results.

I am desirous of placing on record some circumstances connected with the origin of the theological movement, which has for some years occupied so large a space of public attention. They will not be without interest, proceeding, as they do, from an eye-witness of the events which he is about to relate; from one, who was zealously engaged in the promotion of this now celebrated movement at its very origin, and whose personal friendship and regard for those, who have been so long known as the more prominent of its supporters, has never suffered the slightest diminution.

To Mr. Perceval we are indebted for an account of the proceedings in 1833 and 1834, and for copies of various documents connected with those proceedings.¹ For reasons which will appear in the course of the following remarks, I was unwilling that my name should be published in Mr. Perceval's narrative, as having taken any share in the original movement;² but subsequent circumstances have induced me to throw off this reserve, and to acknowledge and avow my responsibility. I shall now proceed, without further preface, to a statement of the events of which I was an eye-witness; and shall not hesitate to express my sentiments, with the freedom and openness, which circumstances seem imperatively to require.

At the beginning of the summer of 1833, the Church in England and Ireland seemed destined to immediate desolation and ruin. We had seen in 1828, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts cutting away from the Church of England one of its ancient bulwarks, and evidencing a disposition to make concession to the clamour of its enemies. In the next year—the *fatal* year 1829—we had seen this principle fully carried out, by the concession of what is called “Roman Catholic Emancipation;” a measure which scattered to the winds public principle, public morality, public confidence, and dispersed a party, which, had it possessed courage to adhere to its old and

popular principles, and to act on them with manly energy, would have stemmed the torrent of revolution, and averted the awful crisis which was at hand.

Deep as was the consternation, and almost despair of the friends of order and religion at this time, when we beheld our rulers sacrifice (*avowedly* under the influence of intimidation) a constitution, which, in the very moment of its ruin, they admitted to be essential to the security of the Church—Deep as was then our alarm and indignation, at being thus delivered over, bound hand and foot, into the power of a hostile Ascendency;³ into the hands of a parliament reckless of the high and sacred interests of religion, and now for the first time numbering by law amongst its members, Romanists and Dissenters; there were yet in store for us events of a more fearful nature. The first sound of the tocsin of revolution at Paris in 1830, ought to have re-united the scattered friends of established order in England: it left them engaged in violent dissensions; and, with the exception of the *Morning Post*, the whole Press of England threw itself into the cause of the revolutionary party in France. Ere long the tide began to flow upon our own shores; and the Tory Aristocracy which had forsaken the Church in yielding Emancipation, were now hurled from their political ascendancy; and the Reform Bill of 1831, a just retribution for their offence, made for a time the democratic principle all-powerful in the State.

It was then that we felt ourselves assailed by enemies from without and from within. Our prelates insulted and threatened by ministers of state—continual motions made for their expulsion from the legislature—demands for the suppression of Church-rates, on the avowed principle of opening the way for a total separation of Church and State—clamours, loud and long, for the overthrow of the Church—Dissenters and Romanists triumphing in the prospect of its subversion, and assailing it with every epithet calculated to stimulate popular hatred. In Ireland, some of our clergy assassinated; the rest deprived of their incomes, and reduced to the verge of starvation; which the government looked calmly on, and seemed to encourage this terrible persecution. In fine, an uninterrupted series of injuries, dangers, and desertions, was closed by the sacrifice of *ten* bishoprics in Ireland; and we were advised to be thankful that a more sweeping measure had not been adopted.⁴ What was next to come? Was this to lead to similar measures in England? Was the same principle of concession to popular clamour, which had led to the desolation of the Irish Church to gratify the Romish democracy there, next to be exemplified in the dismemberment of the English Church, in the hope of conciliating its antagonists? Who could tell? We had seen even prelates of our own Church make concession after concession, on this and other points which should have been defended at all hazards.

Nor was this the worst. The prevailing spirit of innovation had begun deeply to infect the Church itself. Writers had been at work for some time, disseminating superficial and fanciful novelties on religious questions; disdainful all appeal to

authority; and encouraging a taste for a rationalizing theology. The publications of the author of *The Natural History of Enthusiasm*,⁵ which went directly to the subversion of all existing religious systems, as well amongst the Dissenters as in the Church, had been unsuspectingly and greedily absorbed by the public mind. The theory of Church and State had been handled by adherents of a rationalizing school which had grown up in Oxford; on various principles indeed, but in such modes as to generate dissatisfaction with existing institutions. Elements thus prepared were stimulated into unnatural activity by political convulsions. We were overwhelmed with pamphlets on Church Reform. Lord Henley (brother-in-law of Sir Robert Peel), Dr. Burton, Regius Professor at Oxford, and others of name and influence, led the way; and nothing was heard but dissatisfaction with the Church—with her abuses—her corruptions—her errors! Each sciolist presented his puny design for reconstructing this august temple built by no human hands. Such was the disorganization of the public mind, that Dr. Arnold of Rugby ventured to propose, that all sects should be united by Act of Parliament with the Church of England, on the principle of retaining all their distinctive errors and absurdities.⁶ Reports, apparently well founded, were prevalent, that some of the prelates, especially the Bishop of London,⁷ were favourable to alterations in the Liturgy. Pamphlets were in wide circulation, recommending the abolition of the Creeds (at least in public worship), and especially urging the expulsion of the Athanasian Creed; the removal of all mention of the blessed Trinity; of the doctrine of baptismal Regeneration; of the practice of absolution. In fact, there was not a single stone of the sacred edifice of the Church, which was not examined, shaken, undermined, by a meddling and ignorant curiosity.

Such was our condition in the early part of the summer of 1833. We knew not to what quarter to look for support. A Prelacy threatened, and apparently intimidated; a Government making its powers subservient to agitators who avowedly sought the destruction of the Church. The State, so long the guardian of that Church, now becoming its enemy and its tyrant. Enemies within the Church seeking the subversion of its essential characteristics. And what was worst of all—*no principle in the public mind to which we could appeal*; an utter ignorance of all rational grounds of attachment to the Church; an oblivion of its spiritual character, as in institution, not of man, but of God; the grossest Erastianism most widely prevalent, especially amongst all classes of politicians. There was in all this enough to appal the stoutest hearts; and those who can recall the feelings of those days, will at once remember the deep depression into which the Church had fallen, and the gloomy forebodings which were universally prevalent.

But in those hours of darkness, there were hearts, many hearts, burning with shame and grief for the general apostasy around them; hearts which were yet beating high at the thought, that amidst the universal shipwreck and treason, there was One,

whose protection might be relied on; and which were ready at the first opening of possibility, to devote themselves to the service of the Church. I had myself the gratification of promoting in some degree the first movement of reaction in 1832, by publishing in the *British Magazine*, which had been just established by a lamented friend, the Rev. Hugh J. Rose, a series of articles on dissent, which by means of a large mass of evidence derived from dissenting publications, directed public attention to the small number, the difficulties, and declining state of the dissenting interest. I had the satisfaction to find, that those articles not only attracted earnest and uneasy attention amongst dissenters themselves, but that they were extensively quoted and copied by many writers of the Church (often without acknowledgment); and that they formed the basis of several books (such as the *Letters of L. S. E. to a Dissenting Minister*⁸), which were directed against the principles and practice of dissent, with the most perfectly satisfactory results.

These efforts, however, could do little to dispel the fears to which we were continually subject; and in the early part of 1833, the suppression of bishoprics in Ireland, accompanied by most grievous persecution of the Church, brought our evils to the climax.

I had not been very intimately acquainted with Mr. Newman and Mr. Froude,—and was scarcely known to Mr. Keble, or Mr. Perceval,—when our deep sense of the wrongs sustained by the Church in the suppression of bishoprics, and our feeling of the necessity of doing whatever was in our power to arrest the tide of evil, brought us together in the summer of 1833. It was at the beginning of long vacation, (when, Mr. Froude being almost the only occupant of Oriel College, we frequently met in the common room,) that the resolution to unite and associate in defence of the Church, of her violated liberties, and neglected principles, arose. This resolution was immediately acted on; and while I corresponded with Mr. Rose,⁹ Mr. Froude communicated our design to Mr. Keble. Mr. Newman soon took part in our deliberations, on his return from the continent. The particular course which we were to adopt, became the subject of much and anxious thought; and as it was deemed advisable to confer with Mr. Rose on so important a subject, Mr. Froude and myself, after some correspondence, visited him at Hadleigh, in July, where I also had the pleasure of becoming personally acquainted with Mr. Perceval, who had been invited to take part in our deliberations. The conference at Hadleigh, which continued for nearly a week, concluded without any specific arrangements being entered into; though we all concurred as to the necessity of some mode of combined action, and the expediency of circulating tracts or publications on ecclesiastical subjects, intended to inculcate sound and enlightened principles of attachment to the Church. On our return to Oxford, frequent conferences took place at Oriel College, between Mr. Froude, Mr. Newman, Mr. Keble, and the writer,¹⁰ in which various

plans were discussed, and in which especial attention was given to the preparation of some formulary of agreement, as a basis for our Association.

Mr. Perceval has published three forms of association (pp. 12, 13, and 17).¹¹ The first two of these papers were, I believe, principally composed by Mr. Keble; and considerable discussion took place on various parts of them. It is, however, a mistake to suppose that either of them was finally adopted as the actual formulary of agreement. It always seemed to me, that, however true in a certain sense might be some of the doctrines comprised in those documents, their introduction as fundamental conditions of our union might create much embarrassment, and might limit the sphere of our utility, in prematurely obtruding on the friends of the Church questions, which either from want of knowledge, or from the difficulty of adopting unobjectionable phraseology, might cause offence rather than promote harmony and co-operation. There was some difference of opinion on the question of the union of Church and State, which some of our friends seemed inclined to regard as an evil; while I (and perhaps another) was desirous to maintain the union, notwithstanding the evidently hostile disposition of the State, and its tyrannical suppression of the Irish sees, because, as it appeared to me, we could not attain absolute independence, and the power of self-legislation, and liberty to elect our bishops, except by sacrificing the endowments of the Church, on which our whole parochial system, and the dissemination of religious truth throughout the land, are practically dependent; and, considering that no plan had been suggested for the election of bishops which was not liable to objections and to evils, fully as great as any which may exist under the present system of nomination by the Crown; considering also the fearful consequence of leaving our clergy as a body dependent on the voluntary contributions of the people, who were wholly unaccustomed to the discharge of such a duty, and would be disposed to shrink from it; I could not but think that any efforts which went towards the separation of Church and State, would be injurious to the Church, as well as unavailing in themselves, and prejudicial to our union. Circumstances might be supposed indeed, in which the Church should be prepared to make the sacrifice of her endowments; i.e. if she could only retain them *by relinquishing her vital principles*; but on the occasion now under consideration, we were not reduced to this extremity.

It was after many discussions on these and similar subjects, that I prepared a draft of the *third* formulary, printed by Mr. Perceval (p. 17), which was revised and improved by a friend, and was finally adopted as the basis of our further proceedings; it was as follows:—

**Suggestions for the Formation of an Association
of Friends of the Church**

It will readily be allowed by all reflecting persons, that events have occurred with the last few years, calculated to inspire the true Members and Friends of the Church with the deepest uneasiness. The privilege possessed by parties hostile to her doctrine, ritual, and polity, of legislating for her, their avowed and increasing efforts against her, their close alliance with such as openly reject the Christian Faith, and the lax and unsound principles of many who profess and even think themselves her friends, these things have been displayed before our eyes, and sounded in our ears, until from their very repetition we almost forget to regard them with alarm.

The most obvious dangers are those, which impend over the Church as an Establishment; but to these it is not here proposed to direct attention. However necessary it may be on the proper occasion to resist all measures which threaten the security of Ecclesiastical property and privileges, still it is felt that there are perils of a character more serious than those which beset the political rights, and the temporalities of the Clergy; and such, moreover, as admit and justify a more active opposition to them on the part of individual Members of the Church. Every one who has become acquainted with the literature of the day, must have observed the sedulous attempts made in various quarters, to reconcile Members of the Church to alterations in its Doctrines and Discipline. Projects of change, which include the annihilation of our Creeds and the removal of doctrinal statements incidentally contained in our worship, have been boldly and assiduously put forth. Our Services have been subjected to licentious criticisms, with a view of superseding some of them, and of entirely remodeling others. The very elementary principles of our ritual and discipline have been rudely questioned. Our Apostolical polity has been ridiculed and denied.

In ordinary times, such attempts might safely have been left to the counter operation of good sense and practical wisdom, hitherto so distinguishing a feature of the English character. But the case is altered, when account is taken of the spirit of the present age; which is confessedly disposed to regard points of religious belief with indifference, to sacrifice the interests of truth to

notions of temporary convenience, and to indulge in a restless and intemperate desire of novelty and change.

Under these circumstances it has appeared expedient to Members of the Church in various parts of the kingdom, to form themselves into an Association on a few broad principles of union, which are calculated from their simplicity to recommend themselves to the approbation and support of Churchmen at large, and which may serve as the grounds of a defence of the Church's best interests against the immediate difficulties of the present day. They feel strongly, that no fear of the appearance of forwardness on their part should dissuade them from a design, which seems to be demanded of them by their affection towards that spiritual Community, to which they owe their hopes of the world to come, and by a sense of duty to that God and Saviour who is its Founder and Defender. And they adopt this method of respectfully inviting their Brethren, both Clergy and Laity, to take part in their undertaking.

Objects of the Association.

1. To maintain pure and inviolate the doctrines, the services, and the discipline of the Church; that is, to withstand all change, which involves the denial and suppression of doctrine, a departure from primitive practice in religious offices, or innovation upon the Apostolical prerogatives, order, and commission of bishops, priests, and deacons.

2. To afford Churchmen an opportunity of exchanging their sentiments, and co-operating together on a large scale.

The formulary thus agreed on was printed, and was privately and extensively circulated amongst our friends in all parts of England, in the autumn of 1833. Our intention was not to form a society merely at Oxford, but to extend it throughout all England, or rather to form similar societies in every part of England. But, finding that jealousy was expressed in several high quarters at the formation of any associations, and the notion being also unacceptable to Froude and others [Newman]¹² at Oxford, we ceased, after a time, from circulating these papers, or advising the formation of societies. Some permanent effects, however, were produced. Societies were organized at Bath, Bristol, Ripon, Cheltenham, Winchester, and, I believe, in other places, which have on many occasions done eminent service to the Church. The expressions of approbation which were received from the clergy in all parts of the

country inspired us with increased hopes and confidence of success. We thus learned that the principle of ancient loyalty and devotion was deeply rooted in the parochial clergy of England, and that they were prepared to unite with us in vindicating the spiritual rights of their despised and almost persecuted Church.

It was suggested by friends in the country, that this object might be forwarded if some deputation were to proceed from Oxford to different parts of England, with a view to explain more definitely our intentions and designs. Having no other engagements at the time, I readily undertook this mission; and at Coventry, Winchester, and in London, had the pleasure of meeting many of the parochial clergy, and several eminent dignitaries of the Church, to whom I detailed the circumstances which had led a few retired and studious clergymen to combine together for the Church of England, against its opponents, whether Romanists, Dissenters, or Rationalists. The exposition of our views was received with general approbation, and I returned to Oxford with a heart full of the deepest gratitude to that Providence which had so far signally blessed our undertaking, and of confidence in the high principle and unshaken constancy of the parochial clergy of England.

Thus encouraged, our next proceeding was to devise some mode of giving public and combined expression to the sound and healthy feeling which we found so generally prevalent in the Church;¹³ to obtain some *pledge* of loyalty and attachment to ancient principles, which might inspire mutual confidence, and reunite the scattered and despondent friends of religion. Some declaration of attachment to the Church which might be subscribed by the clergy was then thought of, and it speedily assumed the form of an Address to the Archbishop of Canterbury, which I drew up, and which was communicated to the most influential of our friends in London for revision, and was finally printed, and circulated in the following form:—

**To the Most Rev. Father in God, William,
by Divine Providence Lord Archbishop of Canterbury,
Primate of All England.**

We, the undersigned Clergy of England and Wales, are desirous of approaching your Grace with the expression of our veneration for the sacred office, to which by Divine Providence you have been called, of our respect and affection for your personal character and virtues, and of our gratitude for the firmness and discretion, which you have evinced in a season of peculiar difficulty and danger.

At a time, when events are daily passing before us which mark the growth of latitudinarian sentiments, and the ignorance which prevails concerning the spiritual claims of the Church, we are

especially anxious to lay before your Grace the assurance of our devoted adherence to the Apostolical Doctrine and Polity of the Church over which you preside, and of which we are Ministers; and our deep-rooted attachment to that venerable Liturgy, in which she has embodied, in the language of ancient piety, the Orthodox and Primitive Faith.

And while we most earnestly deprecate that restless desire of change which would rashly innovate in spiritual matters, we are not less solicitous to declare our firm conviction, that should anything from the lapse of years or altered circumstances require renewal or correction, your Grace, and our Spiritual Rulers, may rely upon the cheerful co-operation and dutiful support of the Clergy in carrying into effect any measures, that may tend to revive the discipline of ancient times, to strengthen the connexion between the Bishops, Clergy, and People, and to promote the purity, the efficiency, and the unity of the Church.

Much discussion arose on the question, whether this Address should include an expression of confidence in the *other prelates*, as well as in the Archbishop of Canterbury, which our friends in London considered as essential, in order to obviate jealousies. This difference of opinion caused extreme embarrassment, for the Address was already printed and in circulation amongst the clergy, when it arose. Many of our friends were in great alarm; and from Mr. Rose I received letters expressing serious apprehension that this Address would cause schism in the Church. Our difficulties, indeed, soon became very great. Some of the clergy were apprehensive that the Address might lead to counter-addresses from the party in favour of Church Reform. Others were unwilling to subscribe anything which seemed to contemplate the possibility or reform in our ritual or discipline. Others again supposed the Address to be intended as a condemnation of all change and improvement. Besides this, we found the superior clergy, dignitaries of the Church, &c., in general, extremely timid and apprehensive; in a few cases, very strongly opposed to us. We had no encouragement from any bishop. The prelates in general, permitted the matter to take its course; but two or three of the bishops were decidedly opposed to the Address until near the conclusion, and their clergy were the last to subscribe it. There was, indeed, much misapprehension abroad as to our motives, and we had no means of explaining those motives, without the danger of giving publicity to our proceedings, which, in the then state of the public mind on Church matters, might have led to dangerous results. There was also no inconsiderable jealousy at the apparent presumption of young men without station in the

Church, undertaking so great a work; and we found this to be particularly the case in Oxford.

I had ample opportunity for observing the difficulties which surrounded us; for, being comparatively free from other engagements, the management of the Address, and of the extensive correspondence to which it led, chiefly devolved on me. The correspondence with the diocese of Chichester, and parts of London, Bristol, and Carlisle, was in other hands; but that with the remainder of England and Wales, was carried on by the writer. It was his effort to remove the prevalent misconceptions of our objects; and in this, aided by several friends, he was so far successful, as to witness the gradual accession of the great body of the clergy to the Address. As its completion approached, he went to London to receive the signatures from all parts of the country, which were appended to the Address; and in February, 1834, this document with the signatures of nearly 700 clergy¹⁴ (and more were pouring in) was presented to his Grace the Archbishop of Canterbury, at Lambeth Palace, by a Deputation consisting of members of the Lower House of Convocation, and representatives from the Universities; including many of the Deans, Archdeacons, Proctors of Chapters and of Diocesan clergy, Professors and Heads of Houses from Oxford and Cambridge, some of whom have since been strongly opposed to the theology of the Tracts. To the history of those Tracts, attention shall presently be directed; but in the mean time I shall proceed in my narrative of proceedings connected with the Address to the Archbishop.

During the circulation of the Address amongst the clergy, applications had been received from many steadfast members of the Church amongst the laity, expressing their desire to sign that or some similar declaration. It was impossible to refuse a request so honourable to those who preferred it, and promising so important an aid to the Church. We applied in the first instance to an eminent member of the House of Commons, whose devotion to the Church had been nobly proved, and to another gentleman of distinguished character and rank; and they proceeded to Cambridge in December, for the purpose of conferring with some of our leading friends in high official station there. The result of their deliberations appears in the following Address, which it was proposed to circulate amongst the laity:—

To His Grace the Lord Archbishop of Canterbury.

May it please your Grace,

We the undersigned lay members of the Church, over which, by Divine Providence, your Grace, as Primate of all England, most worthily presides, approach you with the assurance of our respectful and dutiful confidence, at a period when that Church is

attacked with more than usual violence, and by efforts more than ever combined.

We desire to assure your Grace, that in maintaining in all their integrity the institutions of our venerable and apostolical Establishment, your Grace and the several rulers of the Church, who in their respective orders may be associated with your Grace in the maintenance of our Ecclesiastical polity, will be supported by our cordial and zealous exertions.

We are attached alike from conviction and from feeling to the Church of England. We believe it to have been the great and distinguishing blessing of this country; and as laymen, we feel, that in the preservation of that Church, we have an interest not less real, and not less direct, than its more immediate ministers.

While we are not insensible to the possibility of advantage to be derived to all its members from such revived exercise of discipline and superintendence on the part of its bishops, priests, and deacons, as may be sanctioned by the competent authority within the Church, we desire to uphold unimpaired its doctrines, as set forth in its Creeds and Articles, and to preserve that venerable Liturgy, in which is embodied, in the language of ancient piety, the orthodox and primitive faith.

Our earnest hope, and our humble prayer is, that God may still bless all the labours of the friends of the Church, may overthrow the designs of all its enemies, may cause kings still to be its nursing fathers, and queens its nursing mothers, and may render it from age to age the means of promoting His glory, and the advancement of His kingdom upon earth.

It seemed, however, that the honourable and high-minded men who had drawn up this admirable document, found themselves so circumstanced, that the Address could not be put into circulation by them. Considerable difficulties presented themselves in various directions. Under these circumstances it was requisite to look elsewhere for the management of our measure. I was now in London, deputed to arrange this affair, in company with a friend,¹⁵ from whose judgment and zeal great advantages were derived. Observing the difficulties which had arisen, we deemed it necessary to begin again *de novo*, by placing the matter in other hands. A declaration was accordingly prepared in London by a layman, whose virtues, abilities, and munificence had for many years procured for him the veneration of all true Churchmen, and very extensive influence in the management of its principal Societies. This declaration was conceived in the following terms:—

A Declaration of the Laity of the Church of England

At a time when the Clergy of England and Wales have felt it their duty to address their Primate with an expression of unshaken adherence to the doctrines and discipline of the Church of which they are Ministers, We the Undersigned, as Lay-members of the same, are not less anxious to record our firm attachment to her pure faith and worship, and her apostolic form of government.

We further find ourselves called upon, by the events which are daily passing around us, to declare our firm conviction, that the consecration of the State by the public maintenance of the Christian Religion is the first and paramount duty of a Christian People; and that the Church Established in these realms, by carrying its sacred and beneficial influence through all orders and degrees, and into every corner of the land, has for many ages been the great and distinguishing blessing of this Country, and not less the means, under Divine Providence, of national prosperity than of individual piety.

In the preservation, therefore, of this our National Church in the integrity of her rights and privileges, and in her alliance with the State, we feel that we have an interest no less real, and no less direct, than her immediate Ministers; and we accordingly avow our firm determination to do all that in us lies, in our several stations, to uphold, unimpaired in its security and efficiency, that Establishment, which we have received as the richest legacy of our forefathers, and desire to hand down as the best inheritance of our posterity.

It was considered necessary to place the management of the declaration in the hands of a committee of lay members of the Church, who continued for some months to sit in London. The correspondence in which we had been engaged, enabled me immediately to place the committee in communication with zealous and influential laity in seventy of the principal towns and districts of England and Wales, who were ready and willing to lend their assistance in the good work. The committee, however, though animated by the best spirit, and sincerely desirous of the welfare of the Church, were not successful in obtaining such a number of signatures to the declaration as might fairly have been expected, under efficient management. The committee having resolved to receive only the names of heads of families, the declaration when presented to the Archbishop of Canterbury, in May, 1834, contained 230,000 signatures.

The *circulation* of the declaration amongst the laity, however, which took place under the auspices of the committee, produced far more important and decisive effects than could have resulted from any assemblage of signatures. It produced the first awakening from that torpor of despair into which the friends of order and religion had been plunged by the triumph of hostile principles under the Reform Bill. The country was still under the formidable domination of political unions: it was still trembling at the remembrance of insurrection and devastation at Bristol and Nottingham.¹⁶ It beheld a feeble band of patriots in the House of Commons, struggling from the remnants of the British Constitution against a majority of revolutionists fivefold more numerous than themselves. The House of Lords, indeed, nobly stemmed wave after wave of revolution, but we knew not how soon the threats and execrations of the disappointed democracy might rise into another storm, and sweep away this last bulwark of law and order. It was then that the principle of attachment to the Church of England called forth the first public demonstration of attachment to all that Englishmen should hold most dear and sacred. The Declaration of the laity was sent to all parts, and meetings of Churchmen were convened in all the principal towns. So great was the apprehension at this time, that they did not venture at first to assemble openly, for the purpose of recording their attachment to the Established Church; admission was in general restricted to those friends who were provided with tickets.

The result, however, was beyond what the warmest friends of the Church could have ventured to anticipate. Day after day did the *Standard*, then our steady friend and coadjutor in defence of the Church,¹⁷ teem with accounts of meetings of her faithful children in all parts of England. Nottingham, York, Cheltenham, Northampton, Derby, Plymouth, Dorchester, Poole, Liverpool, Norwich, Newcastle, Hull, Bristol, Bath, Gloucester, and many other places, vied with each other in heart-stirring declarations of devotion and fidelity to the Church of their fathers, and resolutions to maintain its rights and its doctrines. Petitions in support of the Church began rapidly to pour into the House of Commons. It seemed as if feelings long pent up had acquired energy from restraint and compression; and the Church beheld with astonishment the power and the substantial popularity of which it was possessed.

Nor was this the whole amount of benefit derived. The resolute declarations of attachment to the Church which thus emanated from the people, found an echo in the heart of Royalty itself, and his most gracious Majesty, King William IV., in May, 1834, took occasion to address to the Prelates of England, assembled on the anniversary of his birthday, his royal declaration of devoted affection to the Church, and of his firm resolution to maintain its doctrines, a declaration which was hailed by all friends of the Church with the strongest feelings of gratitude and loyal attachment. I may here add, that in the autumn, shortly after these events, King William availed himself of an opportunity to call the Conservative party to the head of affairs; and the

impulse which had been given to loyal and constitutional principles by the Ecclesiastical movements of the spring and summer, at once displayed itself in the presentation of thousands of addresses of thanks and congratulations to the King, on the dismissal of the ministry, which were succeeded by more solid proofs of principle, in the return of so great a body of Conservative members of Parliament as instantly and permanently arrested the march of revolution, and raised the Conservative party in parliament nearly to an equality with that of its opponents.

Here we must pause in this branch of the narrative, having carried on the series of our efforts and their consequences, to the revival of sound political feeling in the nation, and the elevation of the Conservative party. Our movement, however, had *no political object of any kind*. We understood indeed that it was rather disapproved by some Conservative leaders. We were certainly never aided or encouraged by them in any way.

It will always be some pleasure to reflect that we were instrumental, in some degree, under Divine providence, in awakening the slumbering spirit of religion and of patriotism, a spirit which mere political Conservatism might not have found it easy to evoke; and I trust that the narrative of our obscure and humble, but devoted exertions in the cause of the Church, may encourage the friends of that Church to rely for its defence, not on the professions of political parties, or on the gratitude of those whom they may have raised to power, but to their own good cause, and on the affectionate loyalty of its adherents.

One more result of our exertions, however, must not be passed over in silence. I can sincerely say, that if there was one object more than another which we should have been happy to realize, it was *the union of the Church*. Separated as we were from existing party-feelings and associations, we only looked to the general good. I am sure that we felt as kindly towards one set of men as towards another. None of our publications alluded to party differences. Mr. Rose, in establishing the *British Magazine*, had resolved to keep clear of questions which had divided the Church, and in this we cheerfully concurred. I *know* the kind and charitable feelings which existed in others towards the party called "Evangelical," and am sure that no different sentiment has ever existed in my own mind. The controversies which have since arisen, and have been carried on in a spirit tending to widen our divisions, are a source of grief and disappointment.

How great, then, was our rejoicing to find that in the course of our exertions, men of different theological schools were brought nearer together, were inspired with feelings of mutual respect and esteem, and were convinced that religion, and religious truth, were more widely extended than they had been accustomed to think. The wounds of the Church were every day healing by the balm of brotherly love.

This plain and unvarnished statement of facts will, it is hoped, exculpate those who were engaged in the Association of 1833 and 1834, from any imputation of

designs hostile to the doctrines of discipline of the Church of England, or favourable to the introduction of Romanism. The views which were entertained in common by those who took the lead in that movement are represented by the documents which they circulated, and by them alone. The “Suggestions for the Formation of an Association of Friends of the Church,” and the “Address to the Archbishop of Canterbury,” were the results of our conference, and they alone represent our united sentiments. In those documents, which were received with favour by the great body of the Clergy, we expressed our disapprobation of “*alterations in the doctrines and discipline of the Church,*” our resolution “*to maintain pure and inviolate the doctrines, the services, and the discipline of the Church.*” We asserted “*our devoted adherence to the Apostolical doctrine and polity of the Church, . . . and our deep-rooted attachment to the Liturgy, in which she has embodied, in the language of ancient piety, the orthodox and primitive faith.*” Our attachment to the Church of England is therefore unquestionable.

Our combination was for the purpose of resisting Latitudinarian attempts against the established doctrine and discipline, and of defending the principles of the Church. It is, of course, impossible to assert positively that individuals amongst us may not have had *private* views more or less favourable to Romanism, but most assuredly the existence of such tendencies was wholly unknown; and from all that passed, I have no hesitation in saying, that had there been any suspicion of a tendency to Romanism, our combination would have been impossible. And as far as one individual can answer for the sentiments of others, with whom he was on terms of intimate and unreserved communication, I can safely say, that not one of my friends or colleagues had any designs in favour of Romanism.

Notes

1. Arthur Philip Perceval (1799-1853), in defense of the Oxford Movement, published *A Collection of Papers Connected with the Theological Movement of 1833* (London: Rivington, 1842). *Ed.*

2. William Palmer’s name does, in fact, appear in connection with the revision of the *Churchman’s Manual*. Perceval notes that, by the “encouragement and advice” of the Rev. Hugh James Rose, “application was made to a no less distinguished theologian of the University of Oxford, the Rev. W. Palmer, author of the *Origenes Liturgicæ*” (*A Collection of Papers*, 21). *Ed.*

3. [This was written on the supposition, that the State would retain its power over the Church, and permit the latter no liberty of action.]

Brackets (as above) and all statements contained within brackets in this manuscript are those of the author, who introduced them in his 1883 reprint in order to

add various explanations and clarifications. *Ed.*

4. If the report be well founded, as I believe it to be, that the original intention of the Ministry was to suppress a considerably larger number of sees, and that they were dissuaded from this design by a Prelate [Whately] whom they had recently nominated to his high office, the gratitude of the Church is eminently due to that distinguished Prelate. The recent exertions made in the same quarter to revive the bishopric of Leighlin, and the personal sacrifices which were offered on that occasion, are beyond praise.

5. Isaac Taylor, author of *The Natural History of Enthusiasm* (London: Holdsworth and Ball, 1829), was an English historian and translator of Herodotus. In his *History of the Transmission of Ancient Books to Modern Times* (1827), Taylor applied the same rules of textual transmission and manuscript evidence to the Jewish and Christian scriptures as to other ancient works. Other published works of his are *Fanaticism* (1833), *Spiritual Despotism* (1835), *The Physical Theory of Another Life* (1836), and *Ancient Christianity and the Doctrines of the Tracts for the Times*, published in two volumes (1839-1842). *Ed.*

6. Thomas Arnold argued, in *Principles of Church Reform* (1833), "Since disunion is something so contrary to the spirit of Christianity, and difference of opinion a thing so inevitable to human nature, might it not be possible to escape the former without the folly of attempting to get rid of the latter; to constitute a Church thoroughly national, thoroughly united, thoroughly Christian, which should allow great varieties of opinion, and of ceremonies, and forms of worship, according to the various knowledge, and habits, and tempers of its members, while it truly held one common faith, and trusted in one common Saviour, and worshipped one common God?" (*The Miscellaneous Works of Thomas Arnold, D.D.*, ed. A. P. Stanley [London: B. Fellowes, 1845], 279). *Ed.*

7. That excellent prelate [Charles James Blomfield], on being informed of the report, took immediate measures to contradict it.

8. The bibliographical reference is to L.S.E., *Letters to a Dissenting Minister, of the Congregational Independent Denomination, Containing Remarks on the Principles of That Sect, and the Author's Reasons for Leaving It, and Conforming to the Church of England* (London: R. Groombridge, 1834). *Ed.*

9. The necessity of associating in defence of the Church had already suggested itself to many minds. I have before me a series of Resolutions for the formation of a General Church Association, agreed on by some Clergy in Cheshire in February and March, 1832; but this design was unsuccessful. I had been in correspondence with Mr. Rose early in 1833 on the same subject; but the particular plan suggested seemed to be open to objections. In a letter dated Hadleigh, Feb. 1, 1833, he says, "That something is requisite, is certain. The only thing is, that whatever is done ought to be *quickly* done: for the danger is immediate, and I should have little fear

if I thought that we could stand for ten or fifteen years as we are." In another communication on the same subject, dated March 8, he says, "You will see we quite agree as to the end, quite agree as to what is desirable, but I cannot allow myself to hope that the means would be feasible. . . . Still I think the notion of creating a spirit of attachment and closer union, is so valuable, that I wish you would give me a letter for the Magazine on the subject."

10. Mr. Keble and Mr. Perceval were not resident in the University. The former occasionally visited us. Mr. Rose was at Durham, and could no longer be consulted.

11. The first proposal for union appears in a letter from Richard Hurrell Froude, which conveyed certain points upon which agreement had been reached during a meeting in August 1833 at Oriel College. The second proposal appears in a letter from John Henry Newman, containing a "matured account (drawn up by Mr. Keble), dated, Oxford, September 6, 1833." The third proposal, titled "Suggestions for the Formation of an Association of Friends of the Church," was published in the autumn of 1833. *Ed.*

12. Regarding the use of brackets here and elsewhere in this *Narrative*, see endnote no. 3, above. *Ed.*

13. [The parochial clergy had called upon us at Oxford to direct them how to give effect to their sentiments.]

14. The Addresses from several dioceses had been previously transmitted to his Grace.

15. The Rev. Richard Greswell, M.A., Fellow of Worcester College.

16. At Oxford we were more than once alarmed by reports, that the Birmingham Political Union intended to march through Oxford on their way to London, and to sack and burn the colleges.

17. I had taken the liberty of suggesting to the accomplished Editor of this Journal, in the preceding autumn, the expediency of writing a series of articles designed to encourage the friends of the Church, by showing the numerical weakness of the Dissenters. This policy was most admirably pursued by the *Standard*, and its good effects became instantly visible. Although the writer deeply regrets that the *Standard* has, for some time past, taken so much of a party tone in religious questions, he gratefully tenders to one of the most powerful and consistent political writers of the age, the expression of warm gratitude for services to the Church in former years, the value of which cannot be too highly appreciated. This journal, however, and the *St. James's Chronicle*, have ceased to merit the confidence of the friends of Church principles. That confidence never ought to be extended to any journal which fosters divisions in the Church. [It is needless to say that these remarks do not apply to the existing *Standard*.]