

As showing the opinion of a distinguished foreign divine on the treatment experienced by the Free Church from the landowners of Scotland, Mr. Maule quoted the published opinion of Dr. Merle D'Aubigné, characterizing that treatment as the grossest intolerance and the fiercest religious persecution. As showing the important and influential status occupied by the Free Church in Scotland, he adduced the following statistics. In the year 1843 it consisted of 470 Ministers, who seceded, with about 500 congregations in all. Since that period, it had increased to 831 congregations, regularly organized, with many Churches and Ministers; although possessed of no other means of supporting Ministers than by the voluntary donations of the congregations themselves, and such of the congregations as were not yet supplied with Ministers ready to receive such as might be appointed over them. Since 1843, that poor country, by one third of its population, had subscribed for ecclesiastical purposes a sum which would, if all were reckoned together, amount to £1,100,000. They had already built six hundred churches, forty were in process of erection, and many more would be commenced in the course of the present year. They had laid out £122,000 for manses; of which they had built 191. They had established no fewer than 558 places of education. They had engaged forty four teachers, at £20 a year salary; forty one at £15; they had 273 teachers at salaries of £10 a year, and 200 at no salary at all. And he should observe, that they did not give a sectarian education, but a moral, religious, and general good one, to all those who chose to come within their pale. They were also about to establish a college, which, he hoped, would be one of the public ornaments of the city of Edinburgh. To that undertaking twenty one individuals had subscribed the magnificent sum of £21,000; and it had been placed in the hands of one of the first architects in Scotland, Mr. Playfair. Such was the body for which he asked the interference of the House.

The House had not refused to grant compulsory power to take land for the purposes of roads and railways; and he did not see why a similar power should be withheld as regarded sites for churches. He would be satisfied to place in the hands of a public officer powers similar to those given by Lord Roseberry's Act. He wished that the site for the church should be chosen, not within an inconvenient distance of the Established Church; and instead of the power given under Lord Roseberry's Act to alienate the property, he merely sought to make the alienation compulsory. He begged the House to consider whether it would be better to give the power suggested by him to a public officer, who would be responsible with the Government and to the public, and to take the quarter of an acre, or half an acre, or at most two acres, which would be required for the site of a Church, from a proprietor; or to accept as the other alternative, the engendering among the people of ill feeling and animosity, of hostility to the Government and landed proprietors. If the House did not meet the evil, and nip in the bud the cause of discontent, it would so extend as to place his country in the same position as a neighbouring country, and to make Scotland as discontented as Ireland.

Sir James Graham approached the subject this second time with very great pain.

He had no hesitation in saying, that he regarded the secession which took place in 1842 as a great national calamity. He would assert also, that persecution on the part of any Christian establishment is not only contrary to its interest, but disgraceful to it. Mr. Maule had quoted several instances in which sites for churches had been refused; but they were comparatively few in number. He had failed to make out a case of extreme necessity. He had admitted that there was a very general disposition on the part of landowners to wait and see whether the disruption which had taken place might not be of short duration, and whether a reconciliation might not be hoped for; and Sir James would contend that the landed proprietors were not to blame for not considering those differences in the first instance as permanent ones. 'But subsequent events have altered the face of things, and the right honourable gentleman has himself admitted that in many instances the opposition first given has been withdrawn.'

Mr. Maule—"I said 'some' instances, not 'many.'"

Sir James Graham—"At all events, the result is, that the opposition of many landed proprietors had been softened without the interposition of the law; and I have no doubt that with the progress of time their objections will become still fewer."

Mr. Maule had made particular reference to the Duke of Buccleuch; and admitted that the Duke exercised his church patronage in a manner which showed that he was actuated by the sole desire of promoting the spiritual welfare of the people. Mr. Maule had also told an anecdote of an interview which had taken place between the Duke and Dr. Chalmers upon that very subject. 'With regard to Dr. Chalmers, I never can hear his name mentioned without expressing the pride which I feel at enjoying his friendship and the veneration I feel for his character. My feelings towards him are those of warm respect and veneration.' Now, when two such characters as the Duke of Buccleuch and Dr. Chalmers meet under such circumstances as those detailed, can it be believed that some peculiar cause did not exist—must there not, in fact, have been some cause at work to account for the Duke of Buccleuch having left so long unanswered the letter of Dr. Chalmers? With pain, he said, he believed there were two causes. The Free Church had exhibited feelings of implacable animosity to the Established Church. 'Their cry with regard to that church has been, "down with it,

down with it!" You must make some allowance for the feelings excited by this conduct.'

There is another reason; the ministers of the Free Church, in those localities in which the landed proprietors had chosen to exhibit their displeasure by refusing sites for churches, have given way to their bitterest feelings, and have used their influence on public occasions in opposition to, and have denounced in what I must call most unjustifiable language, those proprietors who have so refused them. It is but natural that this ill feeling should act and re-act, and anger be thus mutually engendered. This is the true explanation why a man so kind, so generous, so disposed to conciliate the good wishes of those around him, should have so acted as the right honorable gentleman has described. But after all, the right honorable gentleman has mentioned only eleven or twelve proprietors who have refused to grant sites; and then we must bear in mind what the body for whom he speaks has done. He tells us that they have already built 600 Churches, that 40 more are in progress of erection, and that they have raised funds to the amount of £1,100,000. There are only, I believe, about 1,100 Parish Churches in all Scotland; so that already have the Seceders built more than half the number of Parish Churches; whilst they are progressing with others, and are possessed of ample funds, numbers of ministers, and large congregations. My own firm opinion is, that, under all the circumstances, unless you interfere strongly and unnecessarily with the people, religious peace will be shortly established, and all that can be desired will be effected. If such powers as the bill confers be granted, no reason can be shown why they should not be extended to England and Ireland. By the bill, however, a power is taken, restricted to the Presbyterian sect of Scotland, to take by force of law four acres and a half of land. If you take from the proprietors of the soil four acres and a half of land for one sect, why are you not on the same principle, to allow the same power to other sects? 'The Sheriff, according to the statement of my honorable friend, is to decide upon the spot; and as it usually happens that the Parish Church is in the most convenient and populous district, he will generally fix upon some four acres and a half contiguous to the Parish Church. What then, will you be doing by this bill? You will be raising and creating a sort of Babel of Dissent; bringing the whole, as it were, into a centre or focus of fierceness, in order, as it seems to me, to discourage rather than to promote a spirit of christian peace and good will. I believe that the evils of religious strife would be both augmented and aggravated. I do not see why my right honorable friend should press us now to take this step, which he admits is without precedent, and for which he cannot find even any analogy in existing statutes.' Sir James concluded by moving that the bill be read a second time that day six months.

Sir Robert Inglis rose to speak in defence of religious toleration and freedom of conscience—

Why withhold the right of freedom of conscience from the proprietor of the soil? Sir Robert would assert, that the refusals complained of had arisen from a high sense of conscientious duty. Conscience was as dear to those landowners who had declined to grant sites as it was to Dr. Chalmers and Dr. Candlish. If the claim demanded be conceded, it could not be refused to any other sect. He objected that the Seceders from the Scotch Church had not gone into the dark places of the earth, where religious light was most needed and least afforded; but they had generally placed their temples as near as possible in juxtaposition with the churches they had abandoned, as if for the purpose of drawing congregations from the old church to the new one. The question was, whether Parliament would permit persons, on the ground of religious toleration as they asserted, but of religious intolerance as he maintained, to extort, under pretext of law, property from individuals for the purpose of erecting buildings for the promulgation of doctrines to which those individuals were conscientiously opposed.

Mr. Bannerman, about half past five o'clock, moved the adjournment of the debate.

Sir James Graham hoped that it might now be concluded.

Mr. Fox Maule said, that that was impossible; various Members wished to speak, and he could not allow to go unanswered some of the points and accusations of Sir James Graham. Five and twenty minutes could not be sufficient.

The debate was adjourned to the following Wednesday.

From the London Times, June 16.

In the House of Commons last night the Earl of Lincoln moved that the order of the day for resuming the adjourned debate on the second reading of the Protection of Life (Ireland) Bill be now read.

Mr. Ross and Sir R. Peel, as also Mr. M. J. O'Connell and Lord Bernard, availed themselves of the opportunity to give mutual explanations of parts of their speeches on Friday evening last.

The order of the day having been read, the adjourned debate was resumed by Lord Worsley, who briefly stated his determination to oppose the bill.

Sir R. Inglis rose to explain the reasons of his vote in support of this bill, in consequence of Lord G. Bentinck's declaration on a former evening, that all the members who sat around him had made up their minds to oppose it, and to support the amendment of Sir W. Somerville, with the view of turning out the present Government at all events. He was speaking for himself alone; but having felt that there was a necessity for a measure like the present, he would not allow any collateral matter to disturb the vote which he