

The Church.

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER, 1, 12.

VOL. I.]

COBOURG, U. C., SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 18, 1837.

[NO. XXIII.]

Original Poetry.

For the Church.

STANZAS.

Kneel—when Night's latest shadow wanes
Before the sun-bright heralds driven;
When Earth's gray hills and drowsy plains
Waft up their matin songs to heaven.

Kneel—when the noon-tide's sultry hour
O'er the still world's expanse is shed,
'Neath the dark woods o'er-arching bower,
Behold a glowing altar spread!

Kneel—when the eve's soft magic's pour'd,
In holiest calm, o'er earth and sky:—
Then be thy spirit's God ador'd
When Fancy points his throne most nigh.

Kneel—by the glorious sculptur'd shrine,
Where Kingly forms are wont to bend:
The purest vows they breathe, with thine,
May there in mingled strain ascend.

Kneel—in thy chamber's calm—alone—
Unwatch'd, unseen of human eye:—
There speak thine heart's least earthly tone
And hope's glad words—the pure—the high.

Kneel—by the lonely mountain-stream,
The ancient wood—the moaning sea:—
Each spot a fitting shrine may seem,
Where Faith may bring thy God to thee.

Kneel—in the light of opening youth,
Ere hope or sinless love grow cold;
In the pure spirit's stainless truth
The words of life seem meekest told.

Kneel—in thy manhood's brightest prime,
When all the dreams ambition knew—
All the best gifts of life, of Time,
Have caught experience' sober hue.

And when the eternal shadows steal
O'er Earth, and all that centre'd there;—
Then give thy latest strength, to kneel—
Thy latest breath, to murmur pray'r!

Toronto, October, 1837.

JUAN.

ADDRESS

TO THE CLERGY OF THE ARCHDEACONRY OF YORK & C.
(Continued from our last.)

In accordance with the recommendation of the assembled Clergy, your Archdeacons petitioned the Lieutenant Governor and the other two branches of the Legislature to authorise the introduction of an additional column in the rolls of the next assessment, in order that the religious persuasion of the inhabitants might be inserted therein. The measure, owing to the press of business, has not yet been adopted; but, as it is our intention to renew the application, it is hoped that during the next session of the Legislature it will become a law. Indeed the information is so useful and so generally wished for, that no opposition need be apprehended. The Church has suffered much from the misstatements of her enemies respecting her numbers, and though certainly the most numerous denomination in the Colony, we have been again and again represented as the lowest.

There lies before me a religious analysis of the members of the present House of Assembly which appeared in one of our most respectable journals, and which has never been contradicted, in which I find thirty six out of sixty-two, the whole number of Representatives, given to the Church of England, while five only are assigned to the Church of Scotland. Now were we to take these members as indicating the relative proportion of the two churches, it would not I apprehend be found very far from the truth. It is admitted that the same Journal gives four members to Presbyterians not of the Church of Scotland, and therefore the Presbyterian denomination taken generally counts nine or ten Representatives; but the Kirk repudiates the other Presbyterians, and cannot therefore take credit for any more than their own five, or I believe from a recent vacancy, six Representatives.

There are other grounds of approximating to a just estimate of our relative numbers. The first settlers in the Province being U. E. Loyalists were principally members of the Church of England, and since that period the number of Emigrants from the United Kingdom has doubtless borne a proportion to the various religious denominations of the parent State. Now of the twenty-four millions which the three kingdoms are said to contain six are supposed to be Roman Catholics, four Presbyterians and other Protestant sects, and fourteen, including the Wesleyan Methodists, of the Church of England. It is, therefore, sufficiently clear that the Emigrants must bear a proportion to the respective churches. It is not asserted nor is it necessary to contend that such proportion is exact, but it is matter of demonstration and agreeable to common sense, that a much greater number will emigrate from fourteen than from four millions. But our desire is to set this matter at rest by ascertaining in a legal way the exact number of each denomination, and not leaving it to mere conjecture.

I regret that my duty to you, my Brethren, and the tranquillity of our Church, compels me to proceed to the notice of a subject which I would have most willingly avoided, namely the opposition to the Rectories which existed at our general meeting in October last, and which we then thought, from its folly and injustice, would soon pass away. It is a painful subject and very difficult to deal with in christian charity, as it has been sedulously continued by the Clergy and members of the church of Scotland in a spirit by no means commendable. I shall, how-

ever, touch upon its history from its commencement to the present time as gently as truth will allow. The Synod of the Presbyterians in connexion with the Church of Scotland recommended to their different congregations that they should meet and adopt petitions to the Provincial Legislature against the Rectories. This was accordingly done, and the Petitions, as might have been expected, when urged by such authority, were in general conceived in language of unnecessary bitterness and hostility. You are aware, my Reverend Brethren, that the contest respecting the Clergy Reserves was begun many years ago by the members of the Kirk, and has been persevered in to this day with increasing violence and pertinacity. For a time they made a common cause with other denominations against the Church, and some of the petitions, besides the destruction of the Rectories, still pray for the division of the Reserves among all sects, or their appropriation to the general purposes of education; or, in other words, for the support of infidelity, for education, separated from religion, can lead to nothing else.

In consequence of the great number of petitions presented to the House of Assembly on this subject at the commencement of the last session, they were referred to a select Committee to report upon their prayer. Another select committee was also named to report upon the best mode of disposing of the Clergy Reserves.

It is not necessary to enter into a minute detail of the proceedings of the House on the reports presented by these two Committees,—or the violent efforts made to destroy the only provision for the dissemination of pure Gospel principles existing in the Colony, as they have yet failed; but on looking over the different divisions, it is most afflicting to see that some of the most furious opposers of the Church and the most eager to deprive her of her vested rights pretend to belong to her communion. Not so the members of the Kirk, for they not only uphold their church, but seek to enrich her by every exertion in their power, and never for a moment compromise what they call her claims, however preposterous or absurd. But alas! the poison of a spurious liberality has shed its blight over many of those who ought to be the nursing Fathers of our Apostolic church, and for the sake of a hollow popularity they lend themselves to rob and betray her, and thus sacrifice their principles as honourable and religious men.

Now, however much we differ in opinion from the Scotch Presbyterians, we cannot but approve of their firmness and devotion to their church, and, if justice were on their side, we should consider them entitled to our admiration; but we repudiate as unworthy those who declare themselves members of our church, while they seek her temporal destruction and degradation. Were we seeking aggrandizement or grasping at more than our legal rights, they might find some ground of justification; but we desire bare justice only, and this much the members of our Church, if honest men, are bound to support to the utmost of their power,—and, if they do not, they are none of us.

To one important result, and to one only did the House of Assembly arrive after much discussion, comprised in the following resolution, which passed by a majority of thirteen in a house of fifty-three members:—"Resolved, that this House regards as 'inviolable the rights acquired under the Patents by which the Rectories have been endowed, and cannot therefore either invite 'or sanction any interference with the rights thus established.'"

Even on this resolution, so just and reasonable in itself, and which could not have been otherwise without disturbing the titles to property through the whole Colony, we have the mortification to see some opposed, who call themselves members of the Church of England. It would be vain to attempt to reconcile such conduct either with consistency or correctness of principle.

In regard to the arguments used in the Petitions of the Scotch Presbyterians, though copied in a great measure from the resolutions of their Synod, we cannot concede to them the slightest force, while they betray not a little coarseness, selfishness, and bad temper.

They seek the destruction of the Rectories principally on two grounds:—

1st. As conferring powers on the Rectors or Incumbents incompatible with the rights of the Scotch clergy. For such apprehensions there is no foundation;—nor do those who pretend to urge them believe them to be true. Parishes have been formed in all the Colonies without calling forth any complaint, because other denominations felt that neither their civil nor religious liberty was, in the smallest degree, compromised. In fact, the Clergy of the Church of England residing in this Province never had or pretended to have any authority over other denominations, and not even over their own people, except in matters purely spiritual; and so sensible are we of our weakness, as respects our own congregations, that, in seeking from the Bishop an annual convention, we found our proposition on the fact, that our Ecclesiastical law and discipline do not extend to this Colony. Whatever, therefore, the petitions state on this head is deplorably hypocritical, for no such fears or apprehensions were ever cherished or felt; and so perfectly destitute of any foundation are such allegations that no complaint has been made on the subject by any other denomination of Christians in the Province, several of which are unquestionably no less alive to their civil and religious rights than the Church of Scotland.

2d. The value of the Endowments:—

By the Constitution, our Church is entitled by legal right to more than two millions of acres, and because twenty, or twenty-two thousand have been attached to fifty-seven Rectories, a quantity much less than many private individuals possess, and not one hundredth part of her just claim, complaint has been made;—but

such complaint comes with a singularly bad grace from the Scotch Presbyterians, to whose Congregations the Provincial Government has always shewn the greatest readiness to grant glebes.

It is farther to be remarked that, in many cases, the lands composing the endowments of the Rectories have been in possession of their several incumbents, by licence of occupation and order of the Executive Council, from their first settlement in the Parish, and their situation in becoming Rectors is not otherwise improved than in acquiring a better title to what they were in possession of before.

It is necessary to remark, however painful, that the proceedings of the Clergy and Members of the Presbyterians, in connexion with the Church of Scotland, are marked by the same kind of angry complaint (for they deal not in argument) which characterizes those of the Voluntaries and other enemies of Church Establishments in Great Britain; and that, but for the good sense and honourable principles of a large majority of the House of Assembly, a vote would have passed against the Rectories; and although it could never have been carried into effect, it would have tended to unsettle every title in the Province. Happily, the Patents establishing the Rectories cannot be destroyed by any power known to the Constitution, as appears manifest from the fact that the Church of England has preserved and recovered many of her most valuable endowments in New York, Vermont, New Hampshire and Virginia, notwithstanding the crisis of a revolution, because they were secured under the same title as the Estates of private persons. To break down the one, offered a precedent for breaking down the other; and to this men of sense and character never would consent.

Amidst the violence and folly which these petitions present, it is refreshing to find even one moderate in language and fair in principle, so as in a great degree to meet the desire which our church has uniformly expressed, and in which we are still ready to concur. The Petition of the Minister, Elders, and members of the congregation of St. Andrew's, Kingston, in connexion with the Established Church in Scotland, after expressing becoming confidence in the Legislative Council, submits; "whether the Imperial Parliament, by their entire removal from the conflicting interests and endless variety of opinions which have for so many years agitated the country and perplexed the Provincial Legislature, in reference to the Clergy Reserves; are not best qualified to explain their own Act and definitely settle what is doubtful in the existing Statute without the danger of farther disturbing the tranquillity of the Province." The petition proceeds to state that the "Provincial Legislature can do nothing satisfactory, however just and equitable, nor so stable as a declaratory enactment on that subject originated in and passed by the Imperial Parliament, who, it may be trusted, in explaining the provisions of the Act, will be careful to preserve our Constitution inviolate."

This is almost exactly what was proposed by the Bishop and Clergy of our Church in 1822 in their Petitions to the King and both houses of Parliament, soon after the contention respecting the Reserves commenced; for we have always sought most anxiously to avoid agitating the question in the Colony, and continually urged, as we are doing now, its reference for final settlement to the Imperial Parliament.

In passing from the petitions against the Rectories, by the Clergy and members of the Scotch church, I may be allowed, as an act of justice, to contrast their anxiety for the destruction of our church in the colony with the mildness which characterizes the Petition of the united Synod of the Presbyterian church in Upper Canada not in connexion with the Church of Scotland. In urging their claim to share in the Reserves, this respectable body truly state that they were the first organized Presbyterian Institution in the Province; that they have suffered as many privations as any of their fellow christian labourers, and yield not, in loyalty to the Queen and attachment to the British Constitution, to any body of professing christians in the Colony; and in conclusion pray that, in any distribution of the Reserves, they may be included as well as the Church of Scotland. They indulge in no virulence against our church, much less do they plead for her robbery, but satisfy themselves with a courteous appeal for consideration on the part of the Legislature, should a division of the church lands actually take place; and were it a mere question of desert I must say that the Presbyterians in Upper Canada are more indebted for religious instruction to the ministers of the United Synod than they have as yet been to those of the Church of Scotland, and, indeed, whatever moral influence the latter may exercise in their respective congregations, it is a lamentable fact that they are chiefly known to the public as expert agitators against our church.

Much stress has been laid by our opponents on an opinion elicited by Lord Bathurst from the Attorney and Solicitor Generals of England in 1819,—an opinion which contradicts the spirit of all the clauses of the 31 Geo. 3d chap. 31. regarding the Reserves and their appropriation, and in truth contradicts itself. On this point it is sufficient for my present purpose to remark, that we have authorities which we consider far more sound, declaring that the provisions of the statute contemplate the Clergy of the Church of England and no other body whatever. At the same time, the natural effect of such an opinion of the Crown Officers was to beget contention in the Province. Every day's experience more and more proves how deplorable it is that an explanatory Act has not been passed by the Imperial Parliament, settling for ever this perplexed question. It can never receive a satisfactory disposition by any other authority.

In so far as the provisions of the Constitutional Act, in respect to the Clergy Reserves has been carried out, it is quite evident that the Provincial Legislature cannot touch them. The