

THE WESLEYAN.

Halifax, Saturday Morning, June 5, 1853.

THE NORTH BRITISH REVIEW ON WESLEY AND METHODISM.

Our recent quotations from the *North British Review*, in proof of the strictly evangelical character of Methodism, have been most damaging to the sly insinuations and vain assumptions of our friend of the *Presbyterian Witness*. No testimony could possibly come home more directly to the very points at issue than that which has been so abundantly furnished by the *excelsior* trans-atlantic periodical; and some were led to conclude, that if truth were the object after which the *Halifax Witness* was in search, he would be compelled by the clear and emphatic statements made by the *witness* he had cited into court, to admit, that whatever else might be said of Methodism, it was perfectly sound and orthodox on the great leading doctrines of divine revelation. This reasonable expectation has been disappointed. The *Witness* can retract nothing—he would apparently rather lie under the odium of involving Methodism in a groundless charge of Popery, than admit he had written hastily and without due information. He must make good his cause at all hazards, and strangely enough, referring to the *North British*, cautions us against "obtaining testimony from that quarter," asserting in the face of the strongest language, that our "quotations" from it, "do not help us out of our difficulty in the slightest degree"! We doubt whether another man, who has read the article in the *Review*, or our fair quotations from it, can be found to endorse his bold avowal. "Not help us out of our difficulty in the slightest degree"! True—most sage polemic—for the *Reviewer* proves we are in no difficulty, but he places the *Witness* in a "difficulty" from which there is no honourable escape, except on condition of confessing to a grievous error. To say, that the "quotations" do not testify to the evangelical character of Methodism on fundamental points, is to contradict the truth expressed in terms which admit of no equivocation; and with such a manifest effort on the part of the *Witness*, to distort or weaken the force of the clearest testimony, we leave him for awhile to the disapproval of every unprejudiced mind, and to the condemnatory twinges of his own conscience.

There is much in the *Reviewer's* remarks of a commendatory nature respecting Methodism, which he characterises truthfully as "one of the most interesting and important religious movements which the history of the Church presents to our contemplation." He admits that "the Methodists will probably question the accuracy of some of Mr. Taylor's representations of their principles and practices, and they will certainly dispute the soundness of some of his leading conclusions." He admits also, that "the men who founded Methodism were honoured to do a great work," and that "their preaching was made instrumental in converting many thousands in all parts of the country, and in training up a large body of men in the midst of us who have given unequivocal evidence of living under the pervading influence of christian principle." Not only does he speak approvingly of the "direct results of the labours of the founders of Methodism," in England, in the United States, and in heathen countries, but he declares "they have also exerted a most important influence, indirectly, in promoting the advancement of true religion, both in the Church of England, and among the English Non-Conformists"; and therefore he is not ashamed to avow his belief, that "the rise of Methodism in England forms a most important era in the history of the Church of Christ."

Candid as are these statements, the *Reviewer* gives evidence of his not being free from the prejudice, naturally, perhaps, arising from his theological preferences. He has gone as far as we could expect a Calvinist to go. More candid, and better informed on some points, than his admirer of Halifax, he has unhesitatingly admitted that "the doctrines held in common by Calvinists and Evangelical Arminians, with respect to original sin, regeneration, and justification constitute, along with those of the divinity and atonement of our Saviour, the fundamental and

most essential principles of the scheme of revealed truth," and that "it can scarcely be disputed, that these doctrines occupy a higher platform in the scriptural system of truth, than the peculiarities of Calvinism."

We are not surprised, however, to find him, as a Calvinist, giving utterance to the following opinions:

"In a theological point of view, the only question of much interest raised by the history of Methodism, is this, whether it be possible for a large body of men to maintain for a length of time a profession of Evangelical Arminianism, as distinguished from Calvinism on the one hand, and from Pelagian Arminianism on the other."

"Wesley's Evangelical Arminianism, as well as his zealous and devoted piety has continued unchanged among his followers, down to the present day. This is an unusual, if not an unprecedented spectacle in the history of theology, and we cannot but contemplate it with a feeling of deep interest and satisfaction. But we cannot persuade ourselves that this state of things will last."

"We think it can be proved, that the doctrines by which Evangelical are distinguished from Pelagian Arminians, can be held consistently by none but Calvinists, and it is on this ground that we are constrained to regard the theology of Wesley as superficial and inconsistent."

The *Reviewer*, therefore intimates as his opinion, "that if deep and vital piety should continue to flourish among the Methodists, they can scarcely fail to approximate to a more consistent view of the scheme of revealed truth, and abandon their strong prejudices against the peculiarities of Calvinism"; or "if true personal religion should generally decay among them, they will infallibly, in spite of every precaution, and of all legal restraints to which their founder by his 'Deed of Declaration' has subjected them, sink down into Pelagianism."

Want of space will not allow us at present to remark at length upon these opinions. We believe them to be unfounded, and incapable of proof, notwithstanding the confident tone of the *Reviewer*. In all probability we shall refer to them more at large, when we have more time at our disposal. Meanwhile, let not Methodists be induced to relax their efforts to carry out the great design of John Wesley to 'spread scriptural holiness throughout the land,' by the strange statements of either candid or disingenuous writers. They know of the doctrine, that it is of God, and have reason to believe that, as God has honoured, so he will still honour, the agency of Methodism, in accomplishing his redeeming purposes towards a fallen world. The doctrines of Methodism have frequently passed through the fiery ordeal of attack, and come out unscathed. Their agreement with the truth of God has thereby been made more generally apparent. So far from fearing investigation of their doctrinal views, when candidly conducted, Wesleyans invite it, confident in their belief, that the more thoroughly it is sifted, the more clearly will Evangelical Arminianism be seen to be in harmony with the statements of the Sacred Scriptures.

Religious Anniversaries in France.

The Rev. Charles Cooke, in a letter to the *London Watchman*, dated Paris, May 5th, says:

Our religious anniversaries commenced on Monday, the 26th, by a prayer meeting in the Independent chapel of the Rue de Provence, and were closed on Wednesday, by a sacramental service at our chapel of the Rue Montholon. The former was better attended than on any previous occasion, and a much greater number than ever of Christians of our leading denominations assembled at the latter. The memorials of the Saviour's dying love were administered by Pastors of State and Free Churches, Calvinists and Wesleyans, Baptists and Pædo-baptists, Presbyterians, Methodists, and Independents; who all delightfully associated under the banner of the Evangelical Alliance.

The meetings of our different Societies were in general in harmony with such a beginning and such a close; a great work is doing in France! A vast apparatus of means (scarcely one of which existed, or was perhaps thought of in France, when 34 years ago I first set foot on its shores) is now provided, and in full, powerful, and I may add, successful operation.

Two French Bible Societies, with your noble British and Foreign Bible Society, have distri-

buted, during the past year, more than 120,000 copies of the sacred Scriptures. A religious Tract Society has issued, this year, more than a million of tracts, and since its foundation, thirty years ago, has sown the soil of France with fifteen millions of these messengers of mercy. An Evangelical Society which, since the disruption here, is in the hands of the Free Churches, but supported by all, employed last year twenty-six Ministers of the Gospel, (ordained), eleven Evangelists, forty-seven school-masters or school-mistresses, a director and sub-director in a Normal School, in all eighty-six active agents, (besides thirty-two students kept in its Normal School), and expended nearly seven thousand pounds in its work. Another Evangelical Society of recent date, under the direction of clergymen of the National Church, only, have increased their receipts two hundred and eighty pounds above last year, making a sum total of more than two thousand pounds. A Society for the Encouragement of Primary Schools among the Protestants of France, which has a most excellent Normal School, has assisted above a thousand school-masters, and founded fifty-seven new schools, spending during the few years of its existence, above eighteen thousand pounds.

An Agricultural Society, established for the reception of young people of both sexes, who have been condemned by the tribunals for theft or other offences, but who, according to a merciful provision of the French laws are declared by the magistrates to have acted "without discernment on account of their extreme youth," has had a great success in reclaiming those ignorant and vicious youths, by placing them under gospel influences, while teaching them to earn their living.

Lastly, the Institution of Deaconesses, so called, which is open to young women of Christian devotedness, to prepare them to be nurses of the sick, teachers in infant-schools, superintendents of Magdalen Asylums, and so forth,—and which has, within its walls, an hospital for the sick, schools, an asylum, and an institution for the reception of the infant children of the poor, during the day, so that their mothers may be free, to take any employment, by which their temporal circumstances may be improved.

All these, with the one exception of the French Protestant Bible Society, may be considered as fruits of the revival of religion which they are now contributing so effectually to extend and to fortify. Neither has the zest for the establishment of the Redeemer's kingdom, among the subjects of this revival, exhausted all its energies by exertions at home, but a very successful mission among the Bassontos of South America has gained golden opinions for French Christians wherever their labours and successes have been known.

Among the pleasing circumstances which accompanied these anniversaries, one should not be unnoticed;—it is, that many of the speakers were converted Roman Catholics, one of them a Romish priest, now a truly pious pastor. Two of the distinguished personages who presided were likewise converts from Popery, Admiral Baudin, and Count de la Borde. It was gratifying to me also to see, when I looked around me, so many who were in the Wesleyan succession as respects their second birth.

M. Guizot presided at the meeting of the Society for the Encouragement of Primary Instruction among the French Protestants; his speech on that occasion, as well as that which he delivered last year before the British Bible Society, has given ground to a Catholic and legitimate paper to express its astonishment that he does not become a Roman Catholic, and its conviction that he must be on the point of doing so.

Wesleyan Missions—New Zealand.

Letters from Auckland show a steady gradual advancement of all the interests with which the Missionaries there are identified. Three additional places of worship have been opened in the town; the Society increases; and the rising villages around are visited and supplied with Christian ordinances. A Day-school is taught on the Chapel premises. The School for the children of Missionaries and other respectable inhabitants contains nearly 70 children. The Native Institution, at the Three Kings, continues to excite admiration and gratitude. Its admirable adaptation to the wants of the people, and the skill, energy, and patience with which it is

conducted, have secured the countenance and liberal assistance of the Governor, who has authorized an expenditure of £600 for the enlargement of the School-buildings.—From *Mangungu*, Mr. Hobbs records the fact, that on taking a journey to a native village, for the purpose of celebrating marriage, he found a chapel built and completed by native industry. The *Newark Circuit* also is beginning to present a more cheering prospect.—At *Kaipara*, the Church-members are steady in their adherence to Christian ordinances and duties. Two circumstances of most gratifying character have lately occurred on this Station. On occasion of the distressing shipwreck of a vessel belonging to the French navy, nearly 200 persons were cast naked and destitute upon the shore of New Zealand, about thirty miles to the north of Kaipara Heads. They constructed temporary huts on the beach, and sent out a party in quest of help, which, after two days, fell in with a few natives from Okaro, who received them kindly, and encouraged them to send for the main body of the sufferers to refresh themselves at the Christian village. Accordingly they came, and received from the people, who a few years ago would have murdered, and perhaps eaten most of them, a kind and christian welcome. The Union Jack was hoisted on the approach of the party, and the houses, the blankets, and the provisions of the natives were all placed at their service for about ten days, until arrangement could be made for their removal. For the hospitality thus shown, without grudging, they neither asked nor desired a recompense; but the Lieutenant-Governor of New Zealand, knowing how largely their winter stores had been encroached upon by this unexpected demand, gave them his high commendation, and a handsome present likewise. Nor is it only for the bodies of their fellow men that these savages have learned to care. Few Missionary documents possess a higher interest for the thoughtful mind than a narrative forwarded by Mr. Buller, of a Missionary meeting held on his Circuit. About 300 natives were assembled. The Lord's-supper was celebrated on the Lord's-day, and a Love-feast on Tuesday morning concluded the services. Monday was occupied with the Meeting, at which sixteen native speakers bore their testimony to the value of the Gospel, and urged on their brethren the duty and privilege of contributing to the Missionary Society. A collection of £13 bore witness that they did not plead in vain.—In the *Waimate Circuit* there is much temporal prosperity; but their spiritual concerns do not appear to prosper equally. Temptations to worldly-mindedness abound, and increasing intercourse with Europeans does not diminish either their number or their force; so that the Missionary is often sorely tried and discouraged. At *Wellington*, the Missionaries are steadily pursuing their course, and earnestly soliciting the Committee to extend and enlarge their operations in the Southern Island. From *Otago*, Mr. Creed follows in the same strain. The *Nelson Circuit* contains about 550 natives.—*Missionary Report.*

Liberia.

The Second Annual Report of the Trustees of Donations for Education in Liberia gives the following important facts:

"The republic of Liberia comprises some 300,000 inhabitants, of whom about 7,000 may be regarded as civilized. There are more than 2,000 communicants in the Christian Churches, and more than 1,500 children in the Sabbath schools, and more than 1,200 in the day schools. The regular attendants on public worship, counting those of the Church mission on the gold coast at 500, and not counting any in Liberia, are 23,164. Counting Liberia, it will be a low estimate to place the whole number at 30,000, and the other members of their families at as many more, or 60,000 in all. The communicants, estimating those in Liberia at 2,000, are 19,280. The day schools, estimating those in Liberia at 40, and their scholars at 1,200, are 137, with 11,505 scholars. The teachers are nearly all native or Liberian. Funds have been given or bequeathed in the United States to the amount of \$50,000, the income of which is to be applied to the promotion of education in Liberia. Of this amount, \$4,000 is designed to aid in the establishment and support of a sixth high school; \$28,000 is appropriated to the support of students; \$10,000 is to be applied in some mode yet to be determined; and \$8,000 is in the treasury of the Board. It remains to increase the fund to the amount necessary for the support of the proposed college in its infancy; to engage the necessary officers; to erect the necessary buildings, and open the college for the reception of students."