

CANADIAN METHODISM; ITS EPOCHS AND CHARACTERISTICS.

BY THE REV. DR. RYERSON.

Written at the request of the London, Toronto, and Montreal Annual Conferences.

ESSAY VI.—THE CLERGY RESERVE CONTROVERSY; OR, THE CONTEST FOR EQUAL RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES AMONG ALL RELIGIOUS DENOMINATIONS IN UPPER CANADA.

IN my last paper, after having shown that Methodism was the pioneer of civil and religious liberty in Upper Canada, I stated the circumstances which preceded the Clergy Reserve controversy, caused by the attacks of the Archdeacon of York upon the several religious persuasions not connected with the Church of England (called "Dissenters"), especially the ministers of Methodism. In reply to that discourse, *The Reviewer* did not confine himself to the defence of the Methodist ministers, but included the ministers of other religious denominations, by several of whose ministers he was recognized as their champion—they furnishing him with all the books in their possession on the questions of dispute, together with information in regard to the birth and education of their ministers. Among the Baptist ministers were the late Rev. George Barclay, of Pickering, and the Rev. Alex. Stewart, of the town of York—the first agent of the local Bible Society—a man of general intelligence and great energy. Among the Presbyterians was a congregation at Brockville, under the pastorate of the Rev. Wm. Smart, of which the late Sheriff Sherwood, of Brockville, was a principal member. There was also another Presbyterian congregation in Kingston, called the American, of which the late Dr. Edward Armstrong and Marshall S. Bidwell were active members.

An Act had passed the Legislature some years before authorizing Lutheran-Calvinist ministers to solemnize matrimony; and the ministers of the Church of Scotland and some Baptist ministers qualified under this Act. This privilege conferred distinction and profit upon those who possessed it; but they showed little interest in obtaining for Methodist ministers the same right which they enjoyed themselves. The Methodist ministers