

## The Press and General Review.

## THE EXPELLED WESLEYAN MINISTERS.

MEETING AT COLUMB, CORNWALL, ENGLAND.

From the West Briton and Cornwall Advertiser.

He had not heard of one of them; if he answered the first, he did not know what the second might be, and if he answered the second, he did not know anything of the third, whether the object might not be to draw him towards a precipice, to entangle or inflict a deep wound on him, or to bring him in some manner under accusation. The question was, "are you the author of the Fly-Sheets?" Mr. Everett said, "why have you put that question to me first; there are many other preachers before me on the minutes, who have not signed that declaration. The secretary Dr. Hannah said, "because you are the most suspected." "Then," said Mr. Everett, "if I am the most suspected, you have the most evidence to prove my guilt; if you will produce it, I will meet it;" and they were all silent. (A voice, "well they might.") All that was said was, "It is only a brotherly question,"—now is it so? (No, no) If only a brotherly question, the refusing to answer it could never have incurred an extreme penalty,—it could never have been contumacy,—it could never have been a refusal to answer a legal, authoritative, binding question, if it were only a brotherly question,—therefore if it was only such, the expulsion, by their own showing, was not a legal expulsion. (Cheers.) They had nothing to say, but "it is only a brotherly question."—Mr. Everett, are you the author of the Fly-Sheets?—evidently meaning, we have no evidence against you, will you please to furnish us with a little. (Laughter.) "We have not the means of criminating you, will you please to criminate yourself?" But Mr. Everett had too long a head for them; he said, "no, if you have no evidence to prove me guilty, I am not going to help you out; when you produce your evidence I will meet it, but till you produce it, I decline answering your question." He retired from the bar, and instantly the Rev. John Burdall was called to the box,—a man whom I have known from a boy, who travelled in the St. Austell circuit forty-five years ago, and opened Mevagissey chapel with Dr. Cope,—a man with one of the noblest heads and loveliest countenances that I ever saw,—one of the most intellectual of men, and who had weathered the blast of seventy-five winters. I saw him, who had been my own superintendent, dragged from his wife and daughter, and his cottage at York, and without any charge, brought to stand at the bar of conference, there to be questioned by Dr. Hannah and Mr. Bunting, "are you the author of the Fly-Sheets?" The venerable man said, "are there any accusations against me?"—and a hundred voices shouted, "yes, yes;" and the venerable man looked about him and said "where are my accusers,—let them appear and I will meet them;" but they were all as still as mice. (Laughter.) No one of the hundred who shouted out an insult to that patriarch the minute before, then said, "yes, yes, we offer accusation;" when he said, "where are my accusers, let them appear, I will meet them," no one dared to look him in the face and adduce an accusation. But the secretary said, "Oh, it is only a brotherly inquiry." The venerable man said, "I have been more than fifty years among you; I have attended many conferences, but such questions as this I never before heard, such a scene I never before witnessed, and it is too late in life for me to be a party to turning the Methodist conference into an inquisition; until you bring your accusation, I decline to answer the question." In a few minutes these two men were ordered out of the conference, not allowed to sit to listen to the regular business then to go on. A committee was appointed to examine their case. That committee sat in their absence, never put to them another question, had only the fact before them that they declined to answer the very insolent question, and on the following Monday they brought in their opinion that Mr. Burdall, for refusing to answer should receive an admonition, and that Mr. Everett should be expelled from the body. I rose instantly and moved an amendment, which as you may suppose was lost, and of these venerable men, one was admonished and the other expelled. This was on a Monday night, and on the following morning I was called to the bar, and with my excellent friends Griffith, Bromley, and George, declined to answer the question previously put to Mr. Everett. However, Mr. Bromley and Mr. George afterwards said something which they said satisfied them, so that Mr. Griffith and myself stood alone. After the matter had been before a committee, we appeared by direction on the Friday morning, and when called up, a long document was read to us, containing a vast variety of matter altogether unconnected with the act of contumacy, the only thing for which we expected we should be expelled. When that was read we asked to be furnished with a copy. That was denied us, but we urged it, and they refused it again and again. We still stated the reasonableness of our request. Dr. Bunting at last said, "if we furnish you with a copy, you will give it to the public." We said we asked for it to give it our prayerful and careful consideration. He asked us to pledge ourselves not to give it to the public. We said we would

give no pledge, you may intend to expel us by this document, and we may find it necessary to show the public the ground of expulsion. They then said they would give us no sight of it, and there the matter was fixed. The conference left to go to dinner, and we were ordered to be back again at five. At half past eight we were called to the bar; but before that took place, the document containing these charges against us, was moved, seconded, and carried by the conference, and then the President asked us what we had to say on it? We merely repeated the request to be furnished with a copy, to give it our prayerful and careful consideration. It was again denied. We again urged it, till we were worn out, and at last I said, "you know Mr. President, that this contains, in the nature of an indictment, circumstances and charges affecting our religious character; and of such in any civil court in the land I could demand a copy." At that moment they yielded, and it was moved, seconded, and supported that we have a copy. We received it at ten o'clock, and wrote an answer, as directed, by nine next morning. There were several particulars contained in the document, and because we were not prepared to be thus degraded, to be admonished by the President, to discontinue the Wesleyan Banner, to pledge ourselves that we would not write again to the Wesleyan Times, and that we would not say anything against this law of 1835,—because we were not prepared to submit to this, the consequence was that we were expelled from the body. (Hear, hear.) Mr. Dunn then said he was exceedingly weary, having not been to bed for two nights that week and having travelled three hundred miles to come down there. Under those peculiar circumstances, if I or Mr. Griffith should not make anything sufficiently plain, don't be afraid or ashamed to ask us any question bearing on the matter, and we will endeavor to answer it; or if you have heard anything at all about us in our absence, which you don't exactly understand, just ask us the question towards the end of the meeting, and we will endeavor to make it very plain. (A voice, "thank you sir.") In last Friday's West Briton, I find on coming here to day, there is a letter from the Rev. Robert Young, the chairman of the Cornish district, addressed to myself; but he never had the good manners to send me a copy of it, either in print or in manuscript. It has been before the public a whole week, and I never saw a line of it till I came here this afternoon. I find also another letter in the West Briton, of which I had not seen a line until to-day. I think I had better meet these men in their respective places,—Mr. Young at Penzance, Mr. Nyo at Truro, Mr. Garland at Redruth, on Thursday, and friend George Smith at Camborne on Friday. I should like to meet them on their own ground, to look them in the face, and then leave it to a clear-headed and sound-hearted Cornish public to decide, with whom truth and righteousness are to be found. (Cheers.)

The Rev. W. Griffith was received with loud applause. He said—You have heard Mr. Dunn's statement of the ground of our expulsion from the Wesleyan conference, and I am prepared to confirm all that he has said as to the facts of the case. I am not a Cornishman, like my friend Mr. Dunn; but I shall go away with a very queer notion of Cornish folks, if you approve of an expulsion based on such a sandy foundation as that on which ours was based. We have now traversed a very considerable portion of the kingdom; we have addressed tens of thousands of Wesleyans, and tens of thousands of the public who are not Wesleyan Methodists; we have been in agricultural, in manufacturing, and a little in mining districts; and whether we have addressed the country peasant, the manufacturer, or the miner, with very few exceptions indeed, not more than one in a hundred, if so many, the verdict that has been given at our several meetings has been in favor of the expelled, and in condemnation of the conference. The meetings by their votes have said the conference is in the wrong, and has treated us unrighteously; what the verdict of Cornwall will be, if I am spared another fortnight I shall be better able to tell you. I am not going to turn prophet, and yet I should like to know what you think of Mr. Dunn's expulsion,—do you think he deserved it? (Cries of "no.") If the facts he stated are true, was the conference justified in expelling him after that fashion? (No.) Is it right to expel a man who had been thirty years in the ministry without a trial? (no),—without a charge, without a witness being produced against him? (no),—without an opportunity to defend himself, but having a settled purpose to present his reasons for the course he was about to take, the reply was, "we don't want your reasons, answer yes or no." Mr. Dunn has said he wishes you to regard this question calmly; he says everywhere, listen to both sides, read what is written on each side of the question. If I say to any of you, read the Wesleyan Times, I say to you also read the Watchman. If I desire you to listen to me and to my friends, Everett and Dunn, at the same time I say, in private as well as in public, listen to Mr. Young. If you read our Banner, read their Indicator—If you listen to the expelled ministers, and if Mr. Smith, of Camborne, writes a pamphlet, read that also; but be sure to read Mr. Dunn's seven letters to him, not one of which he has answered, and I believe for the good reason,

that George Smith could as easily answer those seven letters as he could turn all the minerals in your mineralogical county into duty water. (Cheers and laughter) After then hearing both sides and reading both sides, give your verdict like men, like christians, like Wesleyans, like Cornish Wesleyans. (Cheers.) I believe the Wesleyan body is now looking towards Cornwall with a great deal of interest to know what the verdict of Cornish Methodists is; and if after you have heard what is said, you approve of the conduct of the conference, think they have acted righteously, equitably, in a brotherly spirit, in a manly fair way towards us, and that we deserve the treatment we have received—all I can say is, stand by the conference, defend it through thick and thin, take your share of the odium that has come on it, and let it see that you will not desert it in this the time of its trial and difficulty. But if on the other hand, you should be under the necessity of coming to a conclusion that the conference is wrong, that it has trampled on its own laws, violated its own usages, adopted an unprecedented course, set at defiance all the laws of the New Testament and all the usages of our own body, and turned itself into an inquisition for the object of victimising a few men who gave them trouble, simply because they maintained an independence of character, and would not acknowledge Dr. Bunting or any other master, and would not admit a minute of conference to be somehow smuggled in,—if you come to the conclusion that the conduct of conference has not been agreeable to the New Testament, and that we have not been righteously dealt with, then I have the same right to say, "stand by us, let conference know your opinion of its acts, speak out, rally around us, don't let us be crushed; and I don't believe we shall be crushed.—" (No, no.) Yorkshire will never allow that; Lancashire, Northumberland, and the Midland counties are in our favor; Norfolk has arisen almost to a man; Suffolk has poured out its hundreds and thousands for the maintenance and defence of our principles, position, and character; and now that we are come down almost to the Land's End, I trust we shall go back and be able to report that Cornwall, as numerous, as heartily, as distinctly as any other portion of the Wesleyan connexion, justifies our position, and through us will rally around those great principles which concern you quite as much as they concern us, which affect your liberty quite as much as they affect our position. (Hear, hear.) For if the ecclesiastical domination which has already shown its head and front in the Wesleyan conference and its power by our arbitrary expulsion, be neglected,—if it be permitted to grow, if the inquisition be permitted to grow, if the inquisition be permitted to advance if the clique be allowed to do as it will,—depend on it, having begun with a few independent men in the conference, they will begin to act on the independent men in the connexion. (Hear, hear.) Will begin, did I say?—they have already begun. Have you not heard of Mr. Rodd, of Edinburgh, a local preacher, who replied to a pamphlet written by the superintendent of the Edinburgh circuit and chairman of the Edinburgh district, in which pamphlet the writer had courted examination, inquiry, and discussion; and because the local preacher was a better writer, and a better logician than his superintendent, Mr. Horton, so that he could not out-argue him, the superintendent, at a local preachers' meeting, without a charge, a trial, or a particle of evidence, without giving the man an opportunity of self-defence, in the sight of all the local preachers he takes out his pencil and scratches Mr. Rodd's name from the local preachers' plan, tells him to leave the vestry and go about his business. Will you allow that in Cornwall? Methinks the spirit of Cornishmen had gone off at the Land's End and been buried in the Atlantic, if Cornish Methodists will submit to such treatment as this at the hands of such men. For who are they? (A voice "fallible men.") It is true they are the ministers of Christ, and so is every local preacher if he has received the same call to the work, as much so as Dr. Bunting, the Jacksons, the Bishop of Exeter, the Archbishop of Canterbury, or any others. The only difference between a travelling and local preacher being this, that the Wesleyan body, in order that certain arrangements may be carried out, as they deem, more efficiently and fully, have said, "here are some twenty thousand men called of God to preach the gospel. We believe each of them, as far as we can judge, is as fully called to do it as the other; if we had the means we would support the whole twenty thousand, and send them to proclaim the gospel to the ends of the world. But we cannot support them all: we can support eleven or twelve hundred, and as soon as we can support fifteen hundred we will, and as soon as we can support two thousand of them, we will willingly and heartily do so, and send them forth for the discharge of ministerial and pastoral duties. That is the real distinction between the one and the other. I can never believe that the fact of having travelled four years, and being received into connexion with the Wesleyan conference, can give me any spiritual authority, power, or ecclesiastical influence that does not belong to any other preacher. And who are these men that they should use their own arbitrary will, and say to a man, not only their equal, but perhaps by far their superior in in-

telligence, in education, in religious attainment, in ministerial ability, in pastoral fidelity, in usefulness to the christian church and the world,—"I scratch your name off the plan, and you are no longer, as far as I can exercise influence, to preach Christ's everlasting gospel, even though the Head of the Church called you; now you may leave the room and go about your business." Mr. Chairman, you are a local preacher, would you stand that? and would the local preachers of the neighborhood submit to have one of their brethren dealt with in that way? (No, no.) This is, therefore, a people's question, because the very principles upon which the conference conducted itself in the case of Mr. Everett, Mr. Dunn, and myself, if not checked, will be brought to bear most arbitrarily and unrighteously on the position and status of every officer in the Wesleyan church, and on the members too, for they are now expelling members in the part I came from, Derbyshire and the neighborhood, in just the same fashion. (Hear, hear.) I was going to visit the circuit-town of my own circuit (Ripley) for I claim still that I am a Wesleyan minister; I hold myself to be as much now as I was twelve months ago, one of your Methodist preachers; I believe I am in the sight of God as truly a Wesleyan minister as ever I was.—The conference has expelled me, but the church has not expelled me. The preachers by their votes have silenced me, but the people by their votes tell me to go on; and until the connexion excommunicates me, and says, "we will not recognise you as our minister, we will not hear you preach, or allow you to baptize our children, or receive the Lord's Supper at your hands, or to exercise any ministerial or pastoral function among us,"—until the majority of the people endorsed the act of the conference, I snap my fingers at the conference, I hold their act and deed to be entirely invalid, it is not worth a straw. The conference is not the connexion, the conference is not Methodism, twelve hundred preachers are not the body, they are not the majority, they are but a small fraction of the whole.—They say, "if you don't like us, leave us"—ah, if the people had got that sentiment, and used it towards the conference, I am quite sure the people, with the preachers whom God has raised up amongst them, could do much better without the conference, than the conference without them. (Hear, hear.) However, as I have said, I still reckon myself to be a Wesleyan preacher. When last Sunday fortnight I was going to my circuit town to preach out of doors, because I could not preach in the chapel, as I was entering the hamlet, as I should rather call it, between thirty and forty men met me. I asked, "where have you been?" They said they had just come from a class-meeting, and such a class-meeting they did not recollect ever to have had in their lives. I knew the man; that one used to meet with brother A., another with brother B., another with brother C., and I asked, "what class have you been meeting?" "The class of the expelled," said they. "What do you mean by that?" "Oh," said one of them, "we are expelled members" ("shame!") I said, "you expelled,"—looking at one and then at another; why I had before me some of the most pious, spiritual, devoted, and useful members in the whole circuit. "You expelled," said I, "and why were you expelled?" "Oh," said one of them, "they have got a new fashion now of giving tickets with us." The preacher there is a young man who was only the other day a local preacher, and is not yet even to be properly reckoned as a travelling preacher. But he has been at the institution where he has been taught to govern. He has been at the institution, and if the institution sends out such articles as that man, who will expell fathers and mothes in Israel, as that young man has been doing in Ripley, I think the sooner that Didsbury and Richmond are put up to auction, and the cash spent to support the gospel at home and abroad, the better. However this young man had met some of them for tickets, and instead of the usual way of giving the tickets, he holds his two hands, one with the ticket in it and the other open, and after asking the state of mind, before presenting the ticket he asks, "what will you give for it?" ("Shame.") Is that the way they meet classes in Cornwall? (No) The conclusion of the matter was that the member did not get his ticket, and all because he refused to answer the preacher's question.—On the same evening, a leader from another part of the circuit came to me with tears in his eyes, and said, "Ah, brother Griffith, you know my class; it was always a pleasure to meet that class; it was like going into a little heaven on earth, I always found it a means of grace to my own soul; but ah," said he, "the young preacher meeting for tickets the other day, took eighteen names out of twenty off the class book." Do you think such proceedings as these can be allowed?—do you want to see them introduced into Cornwall? (No, no.) If this is Methodism as it is, would you not rather have Methodism as it was? Oh, but some of you at the quarterly meetings can pass resolutions very unaniously; but let them be for Methodism as it was, and I hope that St. Columb will show itself to be of that spirit. Mr. Griffith then proceeded to give the statements in reference to his own expulsion, which have already appeared in this paper. He then went on to speak of the question put to him in the conference, "are you the author of the Fly-Sheets," which question was put by Dr. Han-