

# THE HARBINGER,

CONDUCTED BY A COMMITTEE OF GENTLEMEN.

In malice to ye childrēn, but in understanding be men.—*St. Paul.*

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[TO THE EDITOR OF THE HARBINGER.]

WAKEFIELD, YORKSHIRE, 3d August, 1842.

MY DEAR FRIEND.—It is some time since you heard from me, not because I have felt but little interest in Canada, and your publication, but, because constant travelling and speaking in behalf of the Colonial Missionary Society leave me no time for other engagements. It is my work almost daily to take a journey, hold a meeting, answer numerous letters from parties enquiring about Canada, and emigration, and wait on leading members of our denomination, on behalf of our missions. Any course more exhausting to the mind and spirits, I can hardly conceive of. But if it in any degree promote the evangelization of our Province, I shall consider the sacrifice that I am making, abundantly recompensed.

I have already visited some of the principal Churches in London, as well as in the country. Respecting the results of my intercourse with the Churches, it is difficult for me to make an estimate. It has not been my business to make collections—I have had to produce an interest in the religious condition of the Colonies, and in the operation of the Colonial Missionary Society. This has been exhibited in most of the Churches visited, in a manner quite unequivocal—in many cases in the spontaneous offers of donations; in others, in complaints that no collections had been made; again, in persons unasked going out to collect subscriptions, and in other similar expressions of awakened zeal. It is quite evident that our Society will become an object of considerable public interest—but it will previously be requisite that all our British Churches should be visited by ministers from the Colonies.

You will wish to know somewhat of the state of religion as it has been presented to me in my tour. In speaking on this topic, I must first mention, that the present is a time of sore persecu-

tion against our churches and people. By persecution, I mean nothing which could be remedied by the application of existing laws, or the enactment of new ones. I mean the tyrannical exercise of social influences to coerce conscience, and punish religious independence. The poorer members of our churches, (especially in the rural districts) are suffering, by exclusion from participation in the charities of their parishes, by being ejected from their cottages, and by a deprivation of employment. The middling classes amongst our people, are punished by exclusive dealing, and a refusal of every situation under the control (direct and indirect), of the clergy and aristocracy. Our higher classes are held at a distance by the neighbouring gentry, and at the same time occasionally flattered and courted, so far as to let them see what would be the reception given them, were they to become recusant of principle. It is universally asserted, that nothing approaching to the present state of things was ever felt before. The tendency of it is to remove from us those who are not Congregationalists upon principle, and then to band together the whole body in a compact form, and to attract public attention and respect for a cause so unfairly dealt with. Excepting in the cases of a few of our more worldly and fashionable people, the results hitherto have been harmless to our cause. The weaker churches still maintain their ground, while throughout the body attention to our distinctive principles, and boldness on their behalf are evidently on the increase. Many, too, are saying, "It is now manifest that a dominant clergy never can be at rest, while there are any around them not subject to their authority."

My impression is, that the present, is not a time of great religious progress in any of the denominations of this country. Indeed, it seems to me, that the characteristic of this time is the stagnancy and inaction of the public mind. On almost every subject, this is the case—there are no improve-