

## THE WESLEYAN.

"THE WESLEYAN" NOT OPPOSED TO A CATHOLIC SPIRIT.—Genuine Wesleyanism has for its motto, *Anti-Sectarianism and a Catholic Spirit*: we rejoice to claim this motto as our own: confident we are, that our exposure of the errors of Universalism or any other essential errors, cannot deprive us of the claim. Our last editorial is not in opposition to the spirit of this motto, neither does it contain a surrender of the distinctive character of Methodism: any effort that may be made to prove the contrary cannot but exhibit a complete specimen of argumentative disingenuousness. It is evident that the whole drift of our remarks were intended to bear against a *latitudinarian*, not a truly Catholic spirit. Is a latitudinarian the same as a Catholic spirit? The answer is,—"A Catholic is not a latitudinarian spirit." If a person oppose a *latitudinarian*, can it, with equal truth, be said, he opposes a *Catholic* spirit? Surely not: for it is allowed they differ one from the other. What is the heading of our last editorial? LATITUDINARIANISM. What is the spirit we opposed? A *latitudinarian*: a spirit which "makes it a matter of perfect indifference what a person's religious creed is, so he professes to be a Christian," and maintains that "an individual may be a Pelagian, a Socinian, a Papist, a Universalist, or a sincere believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, with equal regard to propriety and safety:" this is the spirit with which we said we had no "fellowship." With the least semblance of propriety, can we be said to oppose a Catholic spirit?—With the same propriety only as it can be said that white is black and black white. To force a contrary conclusion upon our remarks, exhibits the following choice specimen of logic: "The Editor of the Wesleyan opposes a latitudinarian spirit—but a latitudinarian is not a Catholic spirit—therefore he opposes a Catholic spirit!!!" Before any person can sustain against us the charge, that our remarks on latitudinarianism are opposed to the spirit of genuine Wesleyanism—he must first show that Mr. Wesley inculcated *latitudinarianism*, an indifference to religious opinions, and taught that a person may be a Pelagian, Socinian, a Universalist, &c., a sincere believer in Christ, with equal regard to propriety and safety: when he proves this, then, and not till then, he gains his point.

True Catholicism is opposed to indifference as to religious creed: it recognizes TRUTH as a matter of such importance as not to be tamely or cowardly surrendered up to ERROR. Whilst it teaches us to love all men, not excepting our enemies, and pray, "grace be with all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," it does not teach us that it is a matter of perfect indifference whether truth or error prevail in the world. That these were the views of the FOUNDER OF METHODISM, the whole history of Methodism proclaims. While he loved all men, Mr. Wesley opposed error in almost every form, especially those errors, whose tendency, he sincerely believed, was to obstruct the progress of vital godliness: hence he waged war against what he considered error in the systems of Popery, Calvinism, Socinianism, Pelagianism, Pharisaism: to represent Mr. Wesley as indifferent

to the prevalence of truth or error is to mis-represent him. His followers, walking in his steps, have contended and still do contend, for what they conscientiously believe to be "the faith once delivered to the saints"—knowing, that the spread of the Redeemer's kingdom, depends, in a great measure, on the spread of *purity of doctrine*. We will now place before our readers some of Mr. Wesley's own words on the subject; and they can then better judge of the degree of credit to be attached to the unfounded charge, which any person might feel disposed to urge, that our last editorial is at variance with "Genuine Wesleyanism."

"From hence we may learn that a catholic spirit is not speculative latitudinarianism. It is not an indifference to all opinions: This is the spawn of hell, not the offspring of heaven. This unsettledness of thought, this being 'driven to and fro, and tossed about with every wind of doctrine' is a great curse, not a blessing; an irreconcilable enemy, not a friend to true catholicism." (Works 5. 6. vol. 502.)

Again:—

"Am I quite indifferent to any man's opinion in religion? Far, very far from it; as I have declared again and again in the very sermon under consideration, in the 'character' of the Methodist, in the 'Plain account,' and twenty tracts besides. I have written severally, and printed against Deists, Papists, Mystics, Quakers, Anabaptists, Presbyterians, Calvinists, and Antinomians. An odd way of ingratiating myself with them, to strike at the apple of their eye! Nevertheless, in all things indifferent (but not at the expense of truth.) I rejoice to 'please all men for their good to edification;' if happily I may 'gain more proselytes' to genuine, scriptural christianity; if I prevail upon the more to love God and their neighbour, and to walk as Christ walked. [¶] So far as I find them obstructive of this, I oppose WRONG OPINIONS with my might." (15. 13. 183.)

Thus, it is evident, that, though Mr. Wesley believed there were many pious persons in some of the sects above named—for as to Arians, Semi-Arians, and Socinians, he asserts they cannot believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, God over all, blessed forever—(16.—179 p.) and consequently cannot be pious in the scriptural sense of the word;—yet this did not prevent him from opposing what he thought to be error in their respective systems, especially if he believed it to operate greatly to the advantage of religion; and yet Mr. Wesley was no bigot. Such precisely, is the line of conduct, which, though at an humble distance, we have endeavoured to pursue. So far from involving the Universalists in indiscriminate censure, we have admitted (see Treatise page 123) "that a Universalist who builds on CHRIST by a living, open active faith &c. will be saved" &c.: yet sincerely regarding the system as one greatly opposed to the extension of Bible-religion, and of the most dangerous tendency, and believing that many are depending their hopes of heaven upon the peculiar doctrines of Universalism, such as, there is no place of future punishment, and the wicked when they die shall be infallibly saved, or that if there be a future punishment, it will only be of a limited duration, instead of placing them upon a personal and saving interest with Christ, we have assailed the system itself, and have endeavoured to show its anti-scriptural character; and yet we do not conceive that we merit the character of a bigot—certainly we merit it no more than he would merit it who published a treatise on *Christian Baptism*.

There is, we acknowledge, a great difference in the