

THE AYLESFORD UNION.

Published on the 1st and 15th of every month, under the auspices of the

AYLESFORD B. Y. P. U.,

And devoted to the interests of Young People's work in Kings County, and to secular interests in the township in Aylesford.

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SUBSCRIPTION PRICE --

If paid within 30 days - 50c per year.
If not so paid - 75c " "
Single Copies - 3 cents.

Advertising Rates furnished on application.

All communications should be addressed to the Editor.

P. O. BOX 39, AYLESFORD, N. S.

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EDITORIALS.

Mr. Ryan and that Berwick Address.

In another column of the present number will be found a criticism by Rev. Wm. Ryan of the address given by the editor of this paper before the young people of the Berwick Baptist Church at the annual roll-call on March 10th, and a synopsis of which appeared in our issue of April 15th. We regret exceedingly that Mr. Ryan has felt it necessary to take such exception to our remarks as renders imperative a response upon our part. As has been already explained the address was given before a body of Baptist Young People and was not intended either to give offense to those holding contrary views or to provoke controversy upon subjects upon which there is generally understood to exist much diversity of opinion. A published report of the remarks made was not thought of until a serious misrepresentation of them seemed to demand it. Further reference to the subject would not have been made but for the necessity put upon us by Mr. Ryan's communication. We dislike controversy and have but little confidence in the good derivable from it, but Mr. Ryan's arraignment demands that we either abdicate or defend our position. This leaves but one conscientious course open to us. Whatever may follow; we trust that no unchristian words may find utterance, and no unkind feelings be engendered.

Mr. Ryan, in the first place, considers the published synopsis of the address "more startling and objectionable than the statement in the Wedge," since the

difference between "so-called Christian churches" and "so-called Christian denominations," "removes none of the stigma implied in the phrase." This we cannot quite appreciate. Surely, to unchurch a body of Christians is one thing, and to unchristianize them is quite another. As before explained, we used the word "church" in its New Testament application to an individual body of Christians, worshipping together in a single locality, observing and bound together by the ordinances prescribed by Christ himself, and practised and enjoined by His apostles. Surely Mr. Ryan will not be startled by, nor object to the frank statement, that we believe a Baptist Church and a Baptist Church ONLY to be such a body. We presume that Mr. Ryan believes that the Methodist Church and the Methodist Church ONLY fulfils the conditions of a New Testament church. To suppose anything else of a man, however broad his views or generous his sympathies, is to rob his efforts for the upbuilding and extension of Christ's kingdom through the agency of a particular denomination of their vindicating foundation of firm and conscientious conviction. As intelligent and broad-minded Christian workers we shall be drawn more closely together by a mutual respect for the sincere convictions and honest efforts of each other, as we labor for a common cause each within the lines of the several denominations, than by parading before the world the mockery of a false unity, which, belied by our lives' conduct, deceives neither ourselves nor the enemy, and must be an abomination in the eyes of Him who "loveth righteousness" and "desireth truth in the inward parts."

Having said this much, our reason for stating that it is the "SPECIAL mission of Baptist Young People to contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered unto the saints," is made clear. If, as we believe, a Baptist Church is "the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth," there can be no mistake in regarding it as the "SPECIAL mission of Baptist Young People," upon whom the burden of that truth's proclamation already rests with daily increasing weight, "to contend earnestly for the faith" just as it was first and "once for all delivered unto the saints." Surely that "faith" must be something more definite than the composite of the multitudinous isms in the wide range "of all churches" from the primitive model to the very brink of Romanism, and that "truth" something more explicit and intelligible than the medley of conflicting proclamation made by the exponents of even the "acknowledged evangelical" bodies. Imagine

a man trying to "stand fast in" such "a faith" or to preach the truth after such a model! No! though all may share various truths in a measure and have some largely in common, the truth of which "the church of the living God," is the "pillar and ground," must have definite and self-consistent proportions. God is not a God of confusion but of order and harmony, and the discord which mars and hinders the progress of His kingdom upon earth is the fruitage of error and not of His truth.

In his discussion of our two mentioned hindrances to the course of truth, Mr. Ryan's reference to a "monastic hierarchy" is as unkind as it is uncalled-for. Our remarks upon the secularizing influences which operate to-day, as of old, against the cause of Christ need no enlargement to make them intelligible to a candid reader. For the benefit of those, however, who may choose to dig a pit for the pleasure of falling into it, we may add that we only mean what Christ meant in His last prayer for His disciples, "I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from evil." But our most serious offense would seem to be in connection with the discussion of our second point. And here Mr. Ryan insists on putting an unfortunate and illogical construction upon our language. Because, while recognising the many benefits derived from association with other denominations, we pointed out one "giant evil" resultant therefrom, our good brother at once jumps over all logic to the conclusion that a charge of disseminating this evil is being preferred especially against Episcopalians and Methodists. If our remarks, which were general, are to be localized to boost up an argument the list should go farther and include at least all the denominations represented in the place where the address was given. Even then our critic's argument reveals a glaring NON SEQUITUR. Because an evil arises from the association of two or more bodies, it by no means follows that this evil is exclusively attributable to any one of them. We flatly deny having made any attempt, by direct argument or insinuation, to locate the source of the evil, and therefore owe no apology to anybody.

In the light of whatever has been premised, Mr. Ryan's concluding remarks upon "so-called union platforms" "compromise bases of union," etc., scarcely require farther comment. We submit, however, that there is abundant room for a compromise of vital principles even among Protestants, and that such a compromise is likely to be involved in every attempt at artificial