

WESLEYAN METHODISM IN UPPER CANADA.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE WESLEYAN.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

It is greatly to be regretted that the official organ of the Upper Canada Conference, and some of its correspondents, should pursue a course of determined and incessant hostility and bitterness towards the British Connexion, its Agents, and Representative. From week to week the warfare is maintained, with a spirit and weapons wholly unbecoming the character of Christianity. The very men who recently professed to eulogise, esteem, and love the British Connexion, now treat its agents and adherents as if they were the filth and offscouring of the earth. The Missionary platform is converted into a military vantage-ground. A religious paper is made to beam with bitterness and ill-will. The claims and commands of Christian charity are wholly unheeded. Her celestial mantle is torn to tatters, and scattered to the winds, instead of being cast over supposed or asserted failings and infirmities. Past associations, past services, previously-acknowledged excellences, are utterly forgotten; and "war to the knife" is the dreadful and appalling cry. A monopoly of righteousness and equity is claimed and asserted.

And is this Christianity? Is this the spirit of Christ, of holiness, and heaven? Is this the love that is the fulfilling of the law, so beautifully and impressively delineated by the pencil of inspiration, in the first epistle to the Corinthians? Believe the affirmative who can.

I know the mode of defence that will be adopted against all this. The adherents of the Upper Canada Conference will justify such conduct on the grounds of self-defence, and the alleged unrighteousness of the cause which they thus oppose. But, even if that cause be wrong, are they therefore justified in departing from the letter and spirit of the Gospel? Will one evil justify another? In defence of that very cause, however, much may be said, and much that has not yet been said. But as the development of such grounds of defence comes not within the design of this communication, I shall waive it for the present, and propound, in the spirit of mildness and candour, a few queries to the writers in question—which I entreat them to consider with impartiality and care.

In the first place, I would ask, are you sure that you, and the body to which you belong, have given no occasion of just offence to the British Conference; that you have done nothing, sanctioned nothing, winked at nothing, to merit and occasion the separation that has occurred? Have you—have your leaders—has your principal leader honestly and constantly endeavoured to observe and enforce the articles of Union, expressed and understood, written and underwritten, in the spirit and in the letter? Has there been no disposition or intention to impair the Union by an undercurrent; to come in collision with the British Conference, and to goad that body to the dissolving act, so as to throw upon it the whole apparent responsibility and blame of the dissolution? Have any just attention and deference been paid to the expressed opinions, warnings, and remonstrances of the late minority of your own Conference, of the British Conference, and of its Committees and Agents? Have not schemes for the settlement of the Clergy Reserve question, schemes of "responsible civil government," and mere worldly considerations and interests, been practically preferred before the unity, harmony, and prosperity of the Conference and Church? Have not resolutions of your own Conference, and its Committees, been flagrantly violated by your principal leader, without censure or rebuke? Have not persons, who are now leading members of your Conference, been grieved and distressed by such conduct? And then, again, are you sure that there is no truth and justice in the cause which you oppose? Are you certain that the Judge of all sees as you see, and will approve your measures and proceedings? Are not the men whom you oppose servants and children of the benign and glorious Being whom you call your Father? And can you, with propriety and rectitude, cast out their names as evil?—"Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye did

it unto me." Are the feelings which you cherish and express, the language which you employ, and the line of conduct which you pursue, accordant with the genius, the temper and spirit of the religion which you profess?

Be it remem' red, that the day is coming in which the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, and strange facts and circumstances developed. You know what has been transacted in private, in secret councils and cabals, and in the recesses of your own minds; you know the hand that has moved the machinery; you know what has passed behind the scenes; the multitude know not—the secondary and subordinate classes know not—but the day will declare it, and the records of heaven shall exhibit it.

In illustration and proof of the temper and spirit which I condemn, I present the readers of "THE WESLEYAN" with the following quotations from the "CHRISTIAN GUARDIAN," which is the official organ of the Upper Canada Conference:—

Speaking of the Rev. E. EVANS's recent letter in "The Wesleyan," the Editor of the Guardian says: "We acknowledge, too, that the head and limbs of the cloven-footed beast are well hid, but the covering which hides the prodigy is so close, we may easily discern the shape of it!"

"He," Mr. EVANS, "must be told his work" is an abomination, his use of the name of the Head of the Church a desecration, and the prayers put up to God from a schismatic heart are, in his" (God's) "own language, a 'stink in his nostrils.'"

Speaking of Mr. EVANS's profession of peace, he says: "Peace! What, in a Hamilton Missionary going to Middle Road with a cunning propensity to take our sheep? If this be honour, grace, and peace, the wolf is the most honourable and pacific animal in creation. These are but hints; the facts in our possession shall come afterwards; and we give hints now that the *proverbe* may know his movements are watched."

"The celebrated Lord CHATHAM, in his day, deprecated the employment of American savages against their brethren in blood and origin; but it was reserved for the year 1810 to witness a professedly Christian Committee employing the contributions of Christian benevolence in a *crusade of worse than bloodshed* against their own countrymen; a crusade prompted by the ambition and arrogance of two or three individuals, and involving in its consequences the everlasting destinies of thousands—a crusade effulgent with no light but that of *firebrands*, and pregnant with no blessing but that of *a rot and death* to the peace of families, the happiness of neighbourhoods, if not to the eternal condition of souls."—Rev. E. Ryerson's Letter to the "Christian Guardian."

The epithets applied to British Wesleyan Methodists in this paragraph, and their connexion with American savages, speak volumes for the spirit and character of the writer—who is, gentle reader, a Methodist Minister, the Secretary of the Upper Canada Conference Missionary Society, and the practical head of the body to which he belongs: I must not permit myself to characterize such language, nor to show the propriety, grace, and consistency with which it comes from its author.

"This crusade," that is, the labours of British Wesleyan Ministers in Upper Canada, "above all others, is evidently repugnant to the common sense and religious feelings of the country at large, as unnecessary, as unjust, and as unchristian."—From the same.

Are common sense and religious feeling all on one side?

"In the absence of this unnatural crusade, those mistaken persons who have been made recruits of it, who would not join our church, would doubtless go to the Church of England, where, I doubt not, they would receive as wholesome food as they do now."

Connecting this, from the same person, with his well-known views and feelings towards the Church of England in Upper Canada, there can be no difficulty in understanding his meaning.

* All the editorial words in italics have been underlined by me; the italics in Mr. R.'s remarks are partly mine. The whole of the quotations are taken from one number of the paper, the 533d.

Such is the spirit of the "Christian Guardian;" to say nothing of truth and equity. Editorial observations I should never think of subjecting to the ordeal of literary criticism, but I quote them as proofs and evidences of the "manner of spirit" which prevails. Let the extracts which I have given above be viewed in contrast with the following passages from "the law and the testimony," according to which we should think, and feel, and speak, and act, and by which we must be judged:—

"And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not." Mark ix. 38, 39.

"Some indeed preach Christ even of envy and strife; and some also of good will: The one preach Christ of contention, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my bonds: but the other of love, knowing that I am set for the defence of the Gospel. What then? notwithstanding every way, whether in pretence or in truth, Christ is preached; and I therein do rejoice, yea and will rejoice."—Phil. i. 15-18.

"Charity suffereth long and is kind—is not provoked, thinketh no evil; beareth" (or covereth) "all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." I. Cor. xiii. 4, 5, 7.

"Judge not that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and behold a beam is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye." Matt. vii. 1-5.

"Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand." Rom. xiv. 4.

And who, now Sir, I would ask, are the *crusaders*? who are the *accusers* and *persecutors* of the brethren? who are *reviling* and *evil speaking*? The public will readily judge. As to myself, while I deprecate and condemn the moral character and tendency of the "Christian Guardian," I am actuated by no bitter or hostile feelings. On the contrary, I would fain repress the rising evil, and cast oil upon the agitated and angry waters. The Christian Guardian is an authorized teacher of truth and righteousness, the medium or organ of a numerous body of Christian ministers; and, surely, I may be permitted to ask, if such be the lessor, what shall be the practice?

I shall conclude this communication with a few observations. If the cordial coalition of the two classes of Methodists in Upper Canada be impracticable or improbable, the most Christian-like and judicious course for each body to pursue is, to abstain from all "bitterness, and wrath, and clamour," and labour to spread the knowledge of the common salvation. "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labourers are few;" let them not quarrel, but work; the field is large enough for all; to different sections of it—to different classes of the community—they are both peculiarly adapted; if they cannot work together, let them work separately; let each do good in his own sphere and way; and let them "consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works," instead of sinfully furnishing occasion for the bitter taunt, "See how these Methodists love one another!"

But, my dear Sir, I must conclude: my sheet is nearly full; and I have already exceeded the proper length. You may, perhaps, hear from me again, should the progress of events, or the signs of the times, or the interests of truth and righteousness, assume such an aspect as to require the lovers of truth and charity to show you their opinion.

I am,
Rev. and dear Sir,
Yours respectfully,
CARROLL.

January, 1811.