

With such a writer it is useless to correspond. His charges have been denied. Mischarges are unproved. Thus the matter stands.

TRIFLING FLAWS.

The above extract refers to a letter published in the Examiner of Nov. 13, signed "A Wesleyan Methodist," and to the reply thereto by the Rev. H. Wilkinson, Secretary of the Conference, in a subsequent number of the same journal. Since the charges contained in the former are designated trifling flaws, it is but fair that those who are in the position corresponding to that of purchasers of such wares, should examine them to see if they do not deserve another appellation. The nature and extent of these trifling flaws will be seen in the following letters:—

MR WILKINSON'S LETTER

To the Editor of the Examiner,

DEAR SIR,—In your paper of the 4th instant, is a lengthy editorial headed "The Christian Guardian and our Correspondents," in which you offer many remarks upon the importance of a "free press," to which remarks I shall take no manner of exception, save the single one that it strikes me, that the connection is not very apparent between that freedom of the press, which renders the press one of the greatest blessings to the human family, and the allowing it to be the ready vehicle of anonymous attacks upon gentlemen holding various respectable positions in the Church and in the community, whose claim to sincerity and veracity, (a claim I will surrender to no man,) is perhaps not a whit behind that of the man, who, for reasons best known to himself, refuses to look in the face, the persons he most wantonly endeavours to injure.

Into the controversy (if it be one) between yourself and the Editor of the Christian Guardian, I have not the slightest intention to enter, though I do beg leave to object to your (unnecessarily as I conceive) censuring the few general remarks of the Guardian Editor, as a reply to the article of Nov. 13th, either official or otherwise; as it seems to me it must be quite plain to every reader, that neither in point of fact, nor by profession, do his remarks in any wise interfere by way of replication with a single statement made, or one position taken therein. The unpleasant use you strongly incline to make of that construction is necessarily entirely improper; and it is because of the peculiar service into which you endeavour to press it that I feel myself obliged, from a regard to truth, to abide objectively to the injustice of your construction.

Allow me also to observe that I consider you are a little astray, when you, by implication, I think certainly, impute the right of anonymous writers, attacking known individuals in Society, uniformly to claim a reply—a wrong position this assuredly. Unless you intended to teach this doctrine, I am utterly at a loss how to account for your hasty, and I will say, cruel assumption in the premises. The absence of a reply in the present case, you at once decide to be a guilty thing, behind the bulwarks of legal forms and technicalities, and even affirmatively inquire, whether the "silence adopted is not an silent admission of the facts," when a "Wesleyan Methodist" has arrayed in his communication. It would seem that the idea never entered into your mind, that the persons attacked might have some very good reasons of a wise and pure character, for declining a newspaper controversy on the topics adverted to, and especially so with a masked or anonymous writer. What a pity that we are so prone to incline to one side in such matters.

But, Sir, I do now most solemnly assure you and all concerned, that the silence observed in the case ought to be attributed to other reasons than conscious guilt, or an admission of the truth of numerous incorrect statements of the writer—to reasons however, which the lovers of strife and of schism, and a few restless croakers in Methodism, are ill-prepared to appreciate. And I would add, that so far as I am concerned, that silence would have been perpetual, and a "Wesleyan Methodist" and all who patronize with him, should have been perfectly welcome to all the spoil that they could possibly realize therefrom had you not mined some portion of your editorial of the 4th instant.

The unbecomable use made by yourself of a course adopted (I speak so far as I am concerned) in the fear of God, as the best on the whole, and involving no little self-denial and fortitude, on my part, miserably changes my views of duty, and, as I prayerfully conceive, relieves me of all responsibility as to the results of a plain statement or two upon the subject. Besides, in addition to the evil construction put upon such forbearance by yourself, (and I learn from others also) the marked accuser of the brethren, is presumptuous enough to say, "I dare the parties implicated rightfully to set aside any of the facts

which I have referred to in this letter." Such being the state to which the author of the article and the "free press" have brought matters. I feel myself positively required to touch the foul thing of Nov. 13th, just so far as may tend to give both yourself and the public to understand, whether your correspondent and his anonymous publications, really are deserving of more than common courtesy, or indeed of any "courtesy" at all, at the hands of the parties he has attacked and belied. Of the article of Nov. 13th, as a whole, I feel less proneness to be a tissue of shameful misstatement, misrepresentation, and untruth. Of the particular so-called "facts," "any" of which we are "dared" to "set aside," I shall select at present but two, (though others are generally at fault,) and shall honour them with rather more than a "savage's arrow," now my hand is in. First, then, the writer states that at a certain Book Committee, an individual present, (it is with the facts, and not the person, we have to do) unblushingly held out the "threat" to the Committee, "that unless fully supported (POLITICALLY) by the Conference, he would not advocate the claims of the Church in England." And, secondly, that on the same occasion, it was affirmed by the same individual, "were the preachers to do their part, his writings would have their desired effect upon the people." Now here are two of the writer's so-called facts, they are statements said to have been made before the Book Committee. And for the sake of effect, I suppose, the writer has chosen to present them as quotations of what actually dropped from the lips of the Speaker, not only thereby securing the precise sense conveyed, but the very words by which that sense was communicated. Here then is something definite. Now is it truth, or is it untruth, which the writer conveys by these professed quotations? This is the important point; and especially so as from the statements as given by him various criminal inferences are gladly deduced by the writer, in order to prejudice the community against certain "leading ministers" in the Conference. As I read your Editorial of the 4th instant, you substantially endorse the whole, and as we have already seen, the writer boldly dares the parties implicated, to set aside "any" of his facts.

What then must be the judgment of the candid public, when they are informed that the pretended quotations, given above, are not true. As a member of the Book Committee, and of course, as a competent witness in the case, and as an individual "dared" to state the truth, I do earnestly and solemnly aver that they are not true. The writer has boldly enough asserted these and other attributes to be facts, but he has not proved them. The burden of proof, of course, lies with him. That proof will now be expected, and, surely, it must be proof, and not evasion or quibble. Should he fail to adduce his proof, I demand a public retraction of his assertions and insinuations. And if it should happen that he cannot do the latter, and still not do the former, he will then be left to enjoy the only remaining and well-earned alternative, and stand before the community as the originator and propagator of calumny and falsehood. In whatever the mask he has assumed may be found of essential service.

With these few observations, written in one sense much against my will, I shall close for the present, and remain, dear Sir,

Yours very respectfully,

H WILKINSON.

Toronto City, December 6th, 1841

REJOINDER OF "A WESLEYAN."

To the Editor of the Examiner.

Cobourg Dec 21st, 1841

DEAR SIR,—Allow me to return you my grateful acknowledgments for the courteous manner in which you were pleased to notice my last communication of the 13th ultimo, in your independent and influential journal. I do so the more cheerfully because it has been the cause of bringing before the public, through your paper of the 18th instant, the Official reply of Mr Wilkinson, Secretary of the Conference; and because you have thus done justice to both parties, by giving me an opportunity of judging righteously of the great and important matters it raised between us. I only regret that that reply should have been confined to the Examiner, and clarity towards the Secretary would lead me to hope that he was not afraid of the light, although he did not give it publicity in the Guardian, as I think he should have done. Since he has deemed it necessary to appear as the expounder of the truth, in relation to the subjects to which my letters have referred, and as the points in dispute are now between Mr. Wilkinson and the readers of your journal merely, but between the great body of the Methodist people and the leading Preachers in the connection, I beg to express my sincere opinion, that in justice to all, it would be better in future not to publish in your paper any reply to my letters from official sources, unless the parties come out first with their communication through the official organ of the Conference. If the parties implicated by my statements be innocent of the charges I have alleged against them (as they declare they are) the publication of my productions with their own official defence, would only tend to establish them in the esteem and confidence of the community. Or otherwise, if my

communications are deemed to be too long, or couched in language which they may consider unbecoming or disagreeable, let the charges only, with the whole of their defence, be fairly exhibited through the Guardian. To this arrangement, the innocent, certainly, can have no objections; and I may add, that it would give me and many of my Christian brethren the highest satisfaction, if the whole of the charges, which I and they believe to be founded in truth, were found in reality to have no foundation whatever. I pity the individual who can wantonly accuse his fellow Christian, and I despise the character of him, who, seeing error or iniquity, under whatever guise it may appear, does not endeavour, to the best of his ability, to have it removed, even at the hazard of being considered a disturber of the peace.

Such being my convictions of duty, I design, on the present occasion, not only to refer to the very unsatisfactory replies which have been given to my last communication, but to add other reasons based upon facts, showing the imperative necessity of adopting some wise and vigorous remedial scheme to arrest our eyes with which our church has been periodically visited, through the uncommodifiable political meddling of weak, selfish, or corrupt men, to whose hands our government has been committed. In doing so I shall endeavour not to resort to the use of object language, similar to that which has been employed by the Editor of the Guardian and the Secretary of the Conference, in their references to that large and influential class whose sentiments I have uttered through the Press. Our notices may indeed be cast out as evil—we may be denominated, as we have been by those of whom better things might have been expected, as "Crockers in Methodism," our honest statements may be denounced as a "foul thing," the origin of our humble efforts to purify the Wesleyan Church in this Province from all the elements which have generated strife and division amongst us in past times, may be traced to "bad ferment coming from sour stomachs;" but language such as this, while it can have no tendency to sustain a good cause, does on the contrary tend materially to lower, in the estimation of intelligent and good men, the character of those who may in their defence, employ it instead of facts and arguments. Such language is not at all calculated, in my opinion, to advance in public estimation, the literary standing of the leading ministers in our connection or the Conference Journal,—quite the reverse, and I deeply regret that it has been so often resorted to in this discussion.

I trust, therefore, that while reviewing Mr. Wilkinson's, or any other communication, I shall not fall into the same errors, but shall be guided by a spirit of Christian moderation toward those with whom I differ, and whose conduct I may be required justly to condemn. The official Secretary, in his letter published in your journal, has declared my communication of the 13th November, to be a tissue of shameful misstatements, misrepresentations, and untruths. Now for one member of a Christian Church to be charged by his brother with a virtual misstatement of facts, cannot but be regarded by community as a very grave offence, and although his name may be sheltered behind an anonymous signature, yet it is no less incumbent on him to rescue himself from such a charge by such evidence as the nature of the case will allow. Here I may again remark, that the peculiar relationship which exists between the Methodist body generally and the Preachers in connection, renders it absolutely necessary for Lay Members when warring against the errors or delinquencies of their official brethren to do it from behind a masked battery. I deplore this necessity, and sincerely wish that all such matters could be equitably arranged by the brethren in open assembly, without resorting to the anonymous discussion of our differences before the world in the columns of a newspaper. Under existing circumstances, however, we have no other alternative, but the great end at which we aim by this discussion, is to render, in future time, such an alternative altogether unnecessary.

Before entering particularly into the merits of Mr Wilkinson's letter, I may first briefly recapitulate some of the causes which led me into controversy with the Secretary of the Conference, with a view of giving the community the means of judging fairly as to my well grounded complaints against Dr. Ryerson, and the leaders of our Conference. In the early part of the present year, having from unquestionable sources been made acquainted with various matters of political intrigue, concocted between the principal of Victoria College, and the leading preachers of the connection regarding a desired scheme of a permanent government grant to that institution, I deemed it my duty publicly to direct the attention of the President of Conference, to the humiliating circumstance in which the members of our body have frequently been placed by the political manoeuvres and stratagems of our preachers, and called upon him as the official head of the Conference if possible to avert the evils with which the Church was again threatened. In that communication, I casually mentioned the name of the Secretary of the Conference in connection with a strange dereliction of duty concerning the non-presentation of an important memorial transmitted by him from the City of Toronto, to be laid before Conference. In that transaction, it would seem, that there was either a most lamentable absence of common sincerity on the part of the Secretary, or the temptation which surround-