

HARMONY PRESBYTERY AND THE AMERICAN BOARD OF FOREIGN MISSIONS.

In a late number of the Vermont Chronicle there is a long article which is copied into the Boston Recorder—a paper which, more than any other, is to be regarded as the organ of the A. B. C. F. M.—consisting first of a letter addressed to the Secretaries of the Board touching its "alleged *unchristian relation to slavery*" by Bishop & Tracy, Editors of the Chronicle—and, among other questions, it asks them whether the "Rev. J. Leighton Wilson was a Slave Holder when he entered the service of the Board?" And then follows a letter from D. Green, one of the Secretaries, in reply, together with letters from Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, upon the same subject, with the concluding remarks of the Editors, a brief extract or summary of which we subjoin :

"It (the Board) does not send Agents to the South for the purpose of collecting funds. It does not elect Slave holders as Secretaries or Corporate members, to manage its affairs. It does not send out Missionaries who are known to hold slaves. And though it did thus in the case of Mr Wilson, yet it was known that Mr. W. went to Africa with the intention of inducing his own slaves and these of Mrs. Wilson to follow him, which was accomplished within three years, as above stated. And 'from the proceedings had, and the opinions expressed, in the case of Mr. Wilson,' we think it may be pretty strongly inferred that they would not do even this in another case. The Board does not receive to its treasury the avails of slaves ; nor has it the means of knowing what monies, if any, come to it from those who hold slaves."

If the secret history of this correspondence were written, it might develop something more than strikes the eye. The Rev Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, once wrote a letter to the Rev. Dr. Taylor, of New Haven, in order to give the Rev. Dr. Taylor an opportunity of vindicating his orthodoxy, which he did to the entire satisfaction of Dr. Hawes ; and this correspondence was published to the world for effect. (So the Editors of the Vermont Chronicle—the whole matter, no doubt, being perfectly understood and pre-arranged between them and the Board—write a letter profess-

edly in order to ascertain what they had the means of knowing touching the incidental connection of the Board to slavery through their Missionaries Mr. and Mrs. Wilson, and through some of their members—but in fact for the purpose of giving the Board an opportunity of apologizing to the Abolitionists for having done in the case of the Rev. Mr. and Mrs. Wilson what they would never do again. And perhaps they might think that such a course is a dictate of wisdom, as it would enable the Board to retain their friends—the Abolitionists—at the trilling expence of hazarding the few receipts which have, of late, been derived from the South—“They would not even do this in another case.” And why ? Because circumstances have changed. When Mr. and Mrs. Wilson were sent out by the American Board, the Presbyterian Church was not engaged in distinct Missionary operations. The American Board was willing to receive our Missionaries upon the condition of our paying into the treasury our Missionary funds, which we did to a much greater amount than was sufficient to support our own Missionaries. But now that our own Church has a seperate Missionary organization, to which the principal part of Southern collections for Foreign Missions are contributed, it greatly alters the case. And Mr. and Mrs. Wilson are indelicately catichised about the servants whom they have inherited, and concerning whom they have shown a liberality which is unparalleled by any example that can be produced from the ranks of Abolitionism. There is also an insult in the form of the question, as presented by the Editors of the Chronicle : “Was Rev. J. Leighton Wilson a slaveholder when he entered the *service of the Board*? The language manifestly implies that the Board is the *Master*, and Mr. Wilson the *slave*. Mr. Wilson, it might be said in reply, is the *servant* of the Lord Jesus, and, as a servant of the church, he is on an equality with any of his ministering brethren. Now, if the Board were the *Church*, the language would be unobjectionable—and yet the thing would not be at all changed, provided one or two men, calling themselves “*the Church*,” should attempt to exercise dominion over him. And here it may not be improper to add, that more of the Missionaries of the Board than one have felt oppress-

sion from a source whence they least expected it—and would have manifested their entire freedom from a galling control, but for the love of the work in which they are engaged.

We give no advice ; but it will be strange if some who may see these remarks, and who may have been prejudiced against our Ecclesiastical course touching this very subject, shall not be almost persuaded to believe that we were right, when they read the avowal that **“The Board does not receive to its Treasury the avails of Slaves.”** The *language* of O’Connell, the other day, was a little more bitter—but its spirit is precisely the same. Whether it will prove the same in its results, time will show.

The action of Harmony Presbytery contains a distinct offer to sustain Mr. Wilson as a Foreign Missionary, provided he abandon “*the service*” of the American Board. And without, at present, expressing any opinion as to the merits of the letter, which is to bring the subject fully before him, we merely throw out these facts, and inferences, as bearing upon the very important question at issue.