

The Press and General Review.

PROGRESS OF EXPULSION AMONG THE WESLEYANS.

From the British Banner.

From under the thrones of tyrants issue voices of thunder—"the world is ours—and perch the tongue that dares to impeach our supremacy! Trembling earth—tumbling stars—all—were made to minister to the glory of our empire!" There is grandeur, of a sort, in this rant and there is a species of beauty in the consistency of tyrants, even when trampling in the dust truth, righteousness, liberty, and man!—Such is the aspect in which the Methodist Conference meanwhile presents itself to all intelligent observers. There is not, in the whole Protestant world, any despotism which admits of a moment's comparison with it. Enormous as are its evils, and the deeds of its administrators, they deserve this praise—they have no respect of persons. Stewards, leaders, local preachers, travelling preachers, all share the same fate; till at length, Pope like, Turk like, they have rushed upon the Press, and, in the person of one of the best, most enlightened, most amiable and most honorable men of the body, they have expelled an Editor simply as such. That Editor is Mr JOHN HARRISON, who conducts with such ability and rectitude the *Wesleyan Times*. Mr. HARRISON has been for a period of twenty years a member of the Society, and for thirteen he has usefully filled the office of local preacher. Mr. SCOTT, his Superintendent, summoned him to appear before a leaders' meeting, on the evening of Tuesday, the 22nd ult. The sitting, which continued till about midnight, was adjourned to the following Thursday, the 24th January, when the work commenced again at half past six, and continued till near twelve o'clock. On this occasion, Mr. SCOTT expounded and explained the laws of the Connexion, and cited portions of the *Wesleyan Times*, to which he took objection, bringing to his aid also the judgment of Lord Chancellor LYNDHURST. After a world of twaddle and quibbling, things approached a crisis, and Mr. HARRISON took his stand upon the law of 1797, in opposition to that of 1835, and after a full and temperate statement of his views, intimated his resolution to retire, declaring he had never agreed to the law of 1835, and never would agree to it, after which he withdrew, and the case proceeded. Mr. HARRIS, of Barnsbury Park, Islington, signalled himself on the occasion, by a generous effort to secure justice for an injured man. After all hope was gone, and the sentence just about to be pronounced, according to the Report in the *Wesleyan Times*,

Mr. HARRIS rose, and begged permission to read the paper which he had presented at the last meeting.—

London, January 19, 1850.

Dear Sir,—It being currently reported that certain charges, periling Church membership, are to be preferred, on Tuesday evening next, against brother John Harrison, we feel prompted, as fellow-members of the same class, to express to you, as our leader, our esteem and Christian affection towards him—our admiration of the Christian deportment manifested by him on all occasions of our intercourse with him in Church-fellowship; and that, notwithstanding his peculiar position in relation to the exciting subjects now occupying so much the attention of our Church, he has, on no occasion, broached the same in the class, but, on the contrary, his relations of experience have, at all times, been characterised by a high degree of intelligence and spirituality, which has not only contributed much to our profit, but also excited our enemies—so much so, that whenever he has been absent it has been to us a matter of regret. We, therefore, sincerely and earnestly hope, that the investigation will not result in terminating our Christian intercourse, and severing our Church fellowship, and we urgently beg you will use every possible effort to avert so unhappy and deplorable an event.—We are, dear Sir, your affectionate and attached Members,

ROBERT WILDISH, T. B. SMITHIES,
FRANCIS FOXEN, JOSEPH LLOYD,
W. M. MOXON, FRANCIS FORD,
GEORGE BUDD, ALFRED LUCKHURST
GEORGE SMITH,

To Mr. William Harris,
4, Barnsbury place, Islington.

We have never read a trial of even a Methodist expulsion, with more shame and humiliation; the thing is thoroughly at variance with the spirit of the New Testament, with the principles of British Jurisprudence, and the theory of human liberty. We cannot but pity the men whose misfortune it is to be the subjects of such an empire! Let it be observed, that this was a matter, with which character had nothing whatever to do. Mr. HARRISON'S Christian excellence was conceded even by his inquisitors. His crime was his having a conscience, which was faithful to the deductions of an enlightened and powerful intellect dealing with facts and Scripture. We doubt if it was possible exciting, interesting, and all-absorbing as this has been since last May, less offensively, and with more studied moderation. Indeed, the foregoing letter, addressed to him by a portion of his fellow-members, seems a very subdued certificate of the real truth of the case, and a

well-merited testimony to personal excellence. This case brings forth a new feature of Wesleyanism, whose subjects have the privilege of hearing, praying, singing hymns, giving money, and expending labor, but who are interdicted the use of reason, the expression of opinion, complaint of grievances, attempts at redressing wrongs, or working for mitigation even when evils have crept in. Now, there is nothing like this in any portion of the so-called Church of God upon the face of the earth. It is unequalled in the atrocity of its cruelty even in the darkest despotism. There is actually more liberty enjoyed both in Turkey and in Russia! There is nothing to be found that at all approaches it except Rome in its earlier days.—Our readers will comprehend it best by looking at it through the medium of the British Constitution. That Constitution provides for parties, Whig, Tory, Radical, Chartist, Socialist, all actual and possible parties, to whom is permitted the use of both tongue and pen, the public meeting, the hustings, and the printing press, within reasonable bounds, they may, in the use of these, deal with the Constitution,—they may impeach the claims of Monarchy,—they may assail the privileges of the Aristocracy,—they may revise the decisions of the Courts of Law,—the proceedings of Parliament and of the Privy Council,—yea, of the Cabinet and the Court itself! In opposition to that, we have only to conceive of such a state of things as this,—a Constitution without a House of Commons, or any sort of representation,—a Constitution interdicting all speaking, all writing, which, in the slightest degree, reflected upon the conduct of the authorities or the wrongs of the people, and which visited with pains and penalties, imprisonment, exile, and death, all who dared to impeach the right of the oligarchy to rule, to act, according to their sovereign pleasure! This would be a reflection of Methodism.

But, according to appearances, Mr. HARRISON will not be the only victim that will signalise the present month. It seems the Rev. JAMES BROMLEY, of Bath, for the very temperate and judicious letters which he has recently published, is called to account, and no doubt is entertained of his expulsion, which seems, indeed, to be a matter of course, since his liberal and generous views are wholly incompatible with his position. These things begin to open the eyes of the people, many of whom, for the first time, are awaking, and become conscious of the weight of their chains. The Methodists of Bristol, from the first, distinguished for spirit and energy, are moving, and, apparently, determined that the present storm shall not be suffered to pass away without something purifying the atmosphere. No fewer than 2,000 members, in the brief space of eight days, have signed a declaration of protest, as follows.—

"We, the undersigned, being members of the Wesleyan Methodist Society in the Bristol North and South Circuits, deeply deplore the recent unrighteous expulsions from our beloved Connexion by the Conference and its agents, as well as the irresponsible power over the people claimed of late years by the preachers. We protest most strongly against the unjust and cruel manifesto recently issued by the President, and now in course of signature amongst the preachers; and, believing as we do that nothing short of immediate and extensive reform in the constitution and government of the body will save the connexion from ruin, and restore the peace and harmony so much to be desired, we do cordially approve of the measures adopted by the Committee of Declarationists, chosen by the meeting of the members of society in both circuits on the 28th of August, 1849, and we pledge ourselves to give to that Committee our hearty co-operation, and support in such further measures as they may hereafter think fit to adopt, in order to effect an object so much to be desired."

This is an example worthy of imitation.—These men speak as becomes them on the subject of constitutional change. The "Constitution" is the source of all the mischief; that makes the tyrants! And whatever may be said to the contrary, the thing so called must be dealt with, if these people would be free.

Other places are speaking out with nearly as much decision as Bristol; and we see it noticed in the *Wesleyan Times*, that upwards of 600 delegates are appointed to the coming Aggregate Assembly, to be held in London next month. This, allowing an average of three to each circuit, will show a representation of no fewer than 200 circuits,—a circumstance which shows, that the labors of the illuminators have not been wholly lost—that Messrs. Everett, Dunn, and Griffith, have travelled and spoken and that the *Wesleyan Times* and *Wesleyan Banner* have written to some purpose. The result, of course, none can foresee; but, sure it is, that something will be done which will go a great way to compensate for all the care, toil, and expense to which liberal-minded men have subjected themselves to bring it about. We are greatly cheered by much we see; and yet, at the same time, we cannot but feel somewhat surprised at the continued rant of our worthy friends about their "beloved Methodism." To our taste, there is far too much of this; the following, from a leader in the *Wesleyan Times*, is an example:—"We are Methodists, and nothing but Methodists; and, therefore, we do not desire anything but Methodism. All we want

is Methodism in its purity, its simplicity, its freedom, and its power; and, in order to this, we must resolutely purge out every corruption, and cut away every trammel."

Now, this is pitiful in people who have yet to show themselves men! Is it not something greater to be Christians? We never hear Presbyterians or Independents ranting after this fashion. It is enough that they are Christians. Polity is, indeed, brought forward by them when circumstances require it, but they have no idea of shouting by the hour, and teaching their very parrots to prate and their birds to sing the glories of Presbytery and of Independency! Our friends should not deceive themselves. Talk as they please about "Methodism in its purity, its simplicity, its freedom," Methodism, in its purity, and in the person of its Founder, was despotism, and his Deed is a despotism, and with out constitutional changes, wash it and scrub it, farnigate and embalm it as they choose, it will remain a despotism, and a despotism only! The people must be admitted to the conference, lay power, that is, the power of the people, must pervade everything, and predominate in every thing. The masterhood of the preachers must give place to the legitimate influence of the people, or free they never can become, and peace they never can enjoy. It is not, therefore, merely a question of "purging out every corruption," that, to be sure, is, indeed, greatly needed, but the mischief is not, materially, a thing of corruption, but a thing of constitution." Let there be no mistake here! And the less they say about Methodism, and the more about Christianity, the less about the Poll-deed, and the more about the New Testament, the less about JOHN WESLEY, and the more about JESUS CHRIST, the better. They will take our counsel for what it is worth, and believe that, most sincerely, we bid them God speed.

IRISH ORATORS.

As an orator, Sheridan belongs to a peculiar class. He was certainly the most artificial of speakers when his ambition led him to imitate Fox in impassioned declamation, or Burke in luminous disquisition and imaginative expression. The private memoranda of Sheridan's speeches show the exact place where the "Good God, Mr. Speaker," is to be introduced, and exhibit painfully elaborated "bursts" of passion into which it was his intention to be "hurried." With regard to imagery, those figures which start up in the mind of the true orator in the excitement of a moment, instinct with the life of the occasion, were in Sheridan's case carefully fashioned out beforehand, and bedizened with verbal trappings, cold and lifeless in themselves, but made to tell upon the audience by grace and energy of manner. It has been repeatedly noticed that, in the notes of Burke's speeches, nothing is observable but the outline of the argument and the heads of the information; in the notes of Sheridan's little is seen but images, epigrams, and exclamations. Sheridan has been often classed with Irish orators, that is, with orators having more feeling and imagination than taste. Irish oratory, it is very certain, is not confined to Hibernians, neither does it comprehend all Irish speakers. Its leading characteristic is sensibility. But this sensibility is good or bad, according to the mental powers by which it is accompanied. In Burke it appeared in connexion with an understanding and an imagination greater than any other orator ever possessed, and second, if second at all, only to Bacon among statesmen. In Grattan it took the form of fiery patriotism, stimulating every faculty of his intellect, and condensing the expression of thought and fancy by pervading both with earnest passion. In Curran it quickened into almost morbid action one of the readiest and most fertile, though not comprehensive, minds ever placed in a human brain. In Shiel it is seen in the rapidity, intensity, and intellectual fierceness giving to the expression of blended argument and fancy. In all of these, sensibility is more or less earnest and genuine, penetrating thought with fire, and thus giving force to the will as well as persuasion to the understanding. In another representative, this sensibility is little more than the boiling over of warm blood, without corresponding power of thought or imagination; and it runs into all excesses of verbose declamation and galvanised common-place. Execrable as it is, however, and doomed to instant damnation in a tempest of hisses as soon as it is printed, it is still not without effect upon uncultivated or excited audiences. The style of oratory is sometimes called imaginative, although its leading absurdities are directly traceable to a want of imagination. It is no more imaginative than Swift's mock reasoning to prove that Partridge was dead, is argumentative.—*North American Review*.

SOCIALISM.

From the New York Evangelist.

I shall say very little on political subjects, for I would not condemn you to hear perpetual repetitions. We are like a carriage in the mire, and I am afraid we shall break the axle-tree in extracting the wheel from the rut. In other words, this crisis will issue in some serious catastrophe, justly inflicted by God on all parties, who have mutually treated each other with unsparring severity. The suppression of the evils with which we are threatened, seems to become

more and more difficult. In vain is the freedom of the press, the liberty of meeting, partially suspended; in vain has the country submitted to a vast system of espionage, and though the Ministry has required confidential reports concerning all the agents of the authorities, so that all who are suspected of socialism may be immediately discharged, yet it is notorious that socialism is making rapid progress in the departments. I was yesterday informed, by a banker, who is in constant communication with Alsace, that he knew from a reliable source, that almost all the workmen in this industrial Province voted en masse for the Socialist candidates. When asked the reason for this important fact, he replied that it resulted in a great measure from the guilty negligence of the employers towards their workmen. In a period of commercial embarrassment, a large majority of the manufactures discharge the mass of the workmen whose present services they do not need, employing them again when they receive fresh demands for their fabrics. These suffering people become soured in their feelings, and find an apostle of Socialism chances to come in their way, they are easily indoctrinated in his sentiments. He tells them of a social state, in which they will be independent of the changing interests of employers, and what wonder if they are easily won by these flattering promises.

That which is transpiring in Alsace, is also being enacted in the other Provinces, and from the same causes, the selfishness of the higher classes, and the demoralization of the lower, left to themselves. There is but one adversary capable of conquering Socialism, it is Christian charity. Where is it to be found in our poor France, except among the few believers dispersed over our country? This word "Socialism" continually falls from my pen. It will occur in almost all of my letters. I think it proper, therefore, to give you a picture of French Socialism, confining myself in the present letter to the description of those tenets which are held in common by all classes of Socialists, in my next I will take a rapid glance at the different schools. I believe that this is one of the surest methods of obtaining intelligence of the present movement.

European Socialism has a double origin; a material industrial origin, and a philosophic origin. Our old Europe is not like your young and beautiful country, she has not hundreds of leagues of land before her to be settled, but her boundaries are contracted. The increase of population, industrial crisis, the substitution of machinery for manual labor, has brought into great misery the poorer classes, a misery, the dark picture of which, as traced by the Socialist, is not at all exaggerated. Meanwhile, the laboring classes have been released by the French revolution from the servitude in which they were held under the old regime. They feel that they possess equal rights with the other classes; from this springs a bitter contrast between their nominal equality and the great actual inequality of condition. It is evident that the classes in possession of power, ought to give their serious attention to this state of things. Profiting by a long peace, without embracing Socialism, they should grapple with the social question, and should seek within the limits of the possible, by individual and public beneficence, by a more equitable distribution of taxation, partially to resolve it. We cannot but look upon those who persist in saying that these are not social questions, that there is nothing to be done among us, as influenced by the same fatal traditions of unenlightened selfishness, which characterized the reign of Louis Philippe. Still more imprudent is it to make no attempt for the remedy of those evils. They were like straw and tow ready to be set on fire, and the spark has been applied by the materialist philosophy which is spreading throughout Germany and France. For more than fifty years a tendency has shewn itself in these two countries to entertain a bold infidel theory, which denies not only the truths of revelation, but also the truths of conscience, such as the immortality of the soul and the existence of God, and which affirms that there is no existence beyond the present, that God and the world are the same, that instead of losing time in the performance of painful duties, we should seek only for enjoyment, and the gratification of the passions.—This impious doctrine, under the name of Pantheism, has made frightful progress within the last ten years in many minds, and it has already spread among the people. It tells man that his business on earth is enjoyment, and when he finds himself deprived of earthly material pleasures, his heart is filled with blind rage against the more favored classes. The Socialists, who pretend by external, material means to create a heaven upon earth, flatter his passions, and promise him a sovereign remedy for his evils in the reorganization of society on such a basis, that all may have material enjoyment within their reach. It will be interesting to see how this primary principle of Socialism is modified in the different schools. I reserve the consideration of this subject for my next letter.

* appears from returns published by the English Postmaster General, that the entire number of letters distributed during the year 1849 had amounted to 337,550,000. In the year 1839 there were only 76,000,000 distributed.—*Express*.