

TORONTO PERIODICAL JOURNAL.

OR, WESLEYAN METHODIST.

"THE TRUTH SHALL MAKE YOU FREE."—JOHN viii. 32.

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Toronto, 1st January, 1845.

THE WESLEYAN METHODIST.

"When preachers of the Gospel become parties in party politics, religious matters, the Church is unedified, and political disputes agitate even the faithful of the land. Such preachers, no matter which side they take, are no longer the messengers of glad tidings, but the ministers of confusion, and wasters of the heritage of Christ."—*Life of Dr. Adam Clarke.*

TORONTO, JANUARY, 1845.

PROSPECTUS

OF A NEW WESLEYAN METHODIST PERIODICAL, to be published in Toronto, on the 1st day of every month, till the next Session of Conference, or longer, if necessary.

A brief Prospectus, or rather a notification, merely, having been already published, of the intention to circulate a journal with the above title; it is now thought proper to lay before the public a Prospectus of a more definite character, declaring the principles and grounds on which subscriptions are invited to the undertaking, from every class of inhabitants in the Province.

It is unnecessary to conceal that the occasion which calls this journal into existence, is that of the recent interference of the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, a prominent member of the Methodist Conference, in political controversy to such an extent as to raise the greatest apprehensions of a division in the church, as well as of an immediate separation in affection, of those who have been so long happily united in the doctrines and discipline of that church: who if undisturbed by their Ministers in relation to their diverse political opinions, would undoubtedly remain united, holding their various opinions as private individuals, without a diminution of Brotherly love, or a violation of the integrity of the church. It is contended by the persons introducing this journal, that it is impossible to maintain unity and Brotherly love, while any Minister of the Body is allowed to take an active part in the politics of the day. It being impossible for Ministers, any more than for the people, to think alike on these subjects; it is equally impossible to avoid the division into parties

of the members of the church, who in every station and circuit of the Province, from the affection entertained by the people for their Ministers, would consequently be arrayed on either side agreeable to the opinions of their Ministers.

When this is considered in connection with the itinerant system, it is impossible not to foresee that the Members of the church in their several localities would be exposed to incessant political agitation, destructive of personal piety, and tending to a certainty, to a dissolution, of the whole church. For one, or two years, a majority in a particular place would cordially accept of their ministers' labours, in consequence of affinity in political opinions, and the minority in that place would be grieved and dissatisfied. On the removal of that minister in accordance with the itinerant plan, the tables would be turned,—the minority would be pleased, and the majority dissatisfied. Or, if no change of political opinion should accompany the change of ministry, the state of things would be no better on that account, as the same two parties in the church would remain.

It requires, surely, no more words to prove, that the peace, prosperity and integrity of the church, is incompatible with the public interference of the Clergy in the politics of the country.

We may also say, that if one be allowed to interfere, because of some peculiar circumstances seeming to countenance such interference, there always will be such circumstances, in the judgment of those whose minds are excited on political affairs. It follows, that if one were allowed to interfere, there are no reasons for objecting to the interference of any or all of them; nor any means of preventing it. And if Ministers of one denomination may publicly interfere in political controversy, so may the Ministers of all denominations, with a view of influencing the votes of their people. Into the effects politically we shall not enter at present. But, any one must know the unhappy results in the progress of religion.

If in the next session of Conference some declaration on this subject, satisfactory to all the members of the church, be not made, disappointment and dissatisfaction will ensue of the most pernicious consequences, and which must result in the organization of another Methodist church, entirely neuter as to politics. A result exceedingly disastrous, and which our most strenuous efforts shall be made to prevent.

The age in which we live is a remarkable age, and when we look at the extraordinary movement made by the consolidation of the Free church in Scotland, and the agitation going on in other churches, it is impossible to resist the conclusion, that the visible church is about to assume a better position in the world. It is about to be separated from all state influence, and state protection, and to be made to rely on the Word of God only,—that great instrument which is destined to bring the church to perfection in the world, and to realize the sublime language of prophecy to the very letter. These events, and prospects, affect the minds and stir up the piety of thousands of the members of the Methodist church, and they anxiously look to their Ministers to take the lead in all movements of improvement and preparation for the approaching states of the church, both as to being suffering witnesses, and happy and prosperous partakers of its glorious success.

But the organization of the Methodist church prevents the people taking the initiative in any alteration of their system of government, that by a majority of the members may be thought incompatible with the improvement required by the age. Late events, to which we have referred, have shown that they have not been able to obtain the attention of the body of Ministers officially, or even to have their views discussed in the *Christian Guardian*—the journal that bears the name of the organ of the Methodist church; more strictly, we think, it ought not to be considered any other than the organ of the Conference. To this we make no objection, so long as it is fully understood. It is impossible that it can be the organ of the people, unless it admits the discussion of subjects in which all are interested, whose object is the general good of the body.

The projectors of the *Wesleyan Methodist*, consider there are sufficient reasons for its establishment, and good grounds on which to hope for general circulation among the members of the Methodist church, and of the attendants on the Methodist Ministry, whose numbers form an important portion of the population; at a random estimate, we suppose their number not to be under 120,000.

The managers of the *Wesleyan Methodist*, have no object of personal gain in view in establishing the journal in question; as before notified, the profit, if any, will be appropriated for the benefit of the church. And as they have no personal object, they have no antagonist feelings of any kind, as a motive for the undertaking. The Journal may circulate in