

member, for political or other purposes. No scripture illustration could be more appropriate, than a portion of the history of Jeroboam, the first King of Israel. It was policy only that directed the setting up the calves of Dan and Bethel. Jeroboam said, "If this people go up to Jerusalem to do sacrifice to the Lord, then shall the heart of this people turn again to their Lord." Did the elders of Israel, denounce Jeroboam, and dethrone him for this act? They did not; they were held responsible, and suffered punishment in the destruction of their nation: nor was a plea wanting to clothe the transaction. "It is too much for you to go up to Jerusalem." The Methodist Conference by their acts say, it is too much for you to support our institutions, we must get the government to help us.

METHODISM IN THE CITY OF TORONTO.

In 1832, the population return of the city amounted to about 10,000; it is now about 20,000, being an increase of near 10,000 since 1832. In 1833, the number of members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, according to the printed Minutes of Conference, was 486; in 1845, the number was 359. In 1832, the number, in proportion to the population, was 48 to every thousand of the population; in 1845 it is only 19 to every thousand. The Wesleyan Methodist Church has not only decreased in number, but has received no benefit from the increase of population. This is another painful proof of the stationary, or rather, retrogressive state of the Church. It is true that there had been a greater reduction some years before, viz., in the year 1834, when Mr. Ryerson's political writings agitated the Province and the Church, in endeavouring to procure the triumph of Sir F. B. Head, by his influence over the Conference and the members of the Church. At that time the Church in Toronto was reduced to 197. It has since only increased 18 members per annum, in a population increasing at the rate of a thousand per annum. Surely there must be a cause for this want of increase: it cannot be that Methodism has been carried into effect. Now we place these facts before the membership of the Church, as deserving their most serious consideration. It is for them to examine the accuracy of our statements, and if they find them fully sustained by fact, then they will surely inquire into the cause. We do not hesitate to say what we think is the cause. Our Church has long been used as a political engine, not perhaps for one party more than another, but for that party that would give it most Government money. We see the same effects in 1845, in relation to the whole Church, as in Toronto, in 1831, resulted from Dr. Ryerson's conduct. The position of the Church now is far worse. Truth and honesty are sacrificed; and as one wrong step invariably leads to another, a decrease in the number of members of the Church must be expected. We entreat the friends of Methodism to give these subjects the most anxious and serious attention, if they wish to preserve the institutions of Methodism in their purity and efficiency, and to hand them down in that condition to their children.

CHAPEL PROPERTY.

We are not able, in our present number, to enter at any length into the subject of the Chapel Property of the Wesleyan Methodist Church,

though it is one of great importance in the present condition of the church. We do not enter on this subject for the purpose of innovation, or to find fault with the Trust Deed at present in use; but as an innovation most fatal to the prosperity of the church has already taken place, in the conduct of one of the leading members of the Conference, Dr. Ryerson—wherein every principle that ought to direct a Christian church has been disregarded for political purposes, or personal interests, this departure from Christian principles—from truth and uprightness, has been followed by the Conference who have identified themselves with Dr. Ryerson's conduct. Considering, therefore, that under the Chapel Deed now in use, the property is really vested in the Conference, that the Trustees have no control over it, and are merely servants in the business of the trust,—considering also that Trustees cease to be Trustees when they cease to be members of the church, and that the Preachers can expel whom they please—considering also, that those who have made one innovation may make others—that they who can violate truth, can change the doctrines of the church, and act in every respect in defiance of the people as they are now doing; and that there is no check upon them, either the leading lay-members must participate in the government of the church, or the people must hold the chapel property. We therefore think that instead of a trust deed, by which Trustees hold the Chapel Property for the Conference, there should be a trust deed by which the Trustees should hold the property in trust for the people. As affairs are now, the people have committed everything to the preachers, trusting they would act in good faith—they have trusted them with the entire government of the church, with the property of the Chapel, and with maintaining their religion, and as they have violated that confidence, and broken faith with the people, they ought no longer to be trusted to the same extent.

In the history of the church of Christ there is no instance of a general departure from Scriptural doctrines on the part of the people, all deviations have originated with the Clergy. It is therefore fair and reasonable and just that the people should hold the property as a check upon the preachers, and the only check they now can be certain of securing.

There are other grounds for suggesting and recommending emphatically that no new Chapel should be settled otherwise than on Trustees for the use of the people—for the use of those who purchased the land, and subscribed for the erection of the buildings; and we should think that 20,000 Methodists, as quite as trustworthy for the perpetuation of Methodist doctrines and discipline as 150 preachers, of like passions with other men.

THE PASTORAL ADDRESS.

"My people are destroyed through lack of knowledge; I will also reject them; they shall be no priest to me; seeing they have forgotten the law of thy God, I also will forget thy children."

Criticism in relation to Methodism is a novel y, but it is the natural consequence of the existence of an opposition, or rather, the people's press; accordingly, the annual pastoral address will require special attention, as it is supposed to have reference to the state of the church at the time the address is issued.

We have much to say with reference to this document, and must defer most of our observations to a future opportunity; at present we only notice part of its contents.

In the first place, we notice, that the address says "the number of members is less than last year, owing to the exercise of discipline and other causes." If to the exercise of the discipline, why was the discipline neglected till 800 wanted its operation? If to other causes? what are those causes? Why are they not stated? The people are interested deeply in the question, and ought to know what those other causes of the decrease are,—how many are cut off by the discipline—and how many by other causes. It further states that it is apprehended that this diminution has been attended with a personal scrutiny. Scrutiny on the part of whom, those that have left or those that remain? What has this to do with the 800 who have left the church? It is further stated, it is also attended with a self dedication and a consolidation among our people of considerable spiritual advantage to them, from which considerations future accessions may be largely and confidently anticipated. That is, from the loss of 800, gone, no one knows or cares where, the future prosperity of the church may be anticipated. This is bringing good out of evil in a manner quite beyond our comprehension. If so much good ensues of a loss of 800, how much would be the effect of the loss of 3,000 members? More consolidation, and more anticipations of increase, undoubtedly.

Again, the address says, One ground of anticipation is the unusually large number of proba-

tioners for the Ministry, cordially and publicly received into the Conference, and ordained since we assembled; and likewise the large number of brethren who have been received on trial for the Itinerancy. This says, there have been many preachers whose probation terminated this year, and many others have commenced their probation this year, and therefore we anticipate a great increase the next year. Did not the first mentioned class labour before this decrease took place? If they did not prevent the decrease of the past year, how are they to ensure an increase for the next? And as to the next reason—a great many have entered the itinerancy upon trial and here there must be an increase of members in the ensuing year, it opens that all the expectations on the part of the Conference for an increase of members, rest on the young men received on trial, and not on the old and experienced preachers. Again, we say these considerations only show the excessive formality with which this pastoral address was framed. It will not bear analyzing. And what ground of hope for the increase of the church is afforded by the increase of the number of preachers, when we have proved, as we believe, elsewhere, that the sermons of the preachers have long ceased to be the means of increasing the number of members, and that Methodism is most sustained by its excellent system of Class Meetings. If those who now preach every Sabbath day are not adding to the number of members, what is the use of increasing their number, by less efficient persons? for it must be admitted that those on trial are not so efficient as those who have laboured in the Gospel many years. The address asserts that the funds are in a favorable condition. This implies that the people have performed their duty in relation to the support of Methodism; an admission not quite consistent with the complaints of the *Guardian*, noticed elsewhere.

The next part of the address is that which cautions the members against indulging a secular party spirit; for which purpose the same words in the pastoral address of the previous year are quoted. We have been informed that Dr. Ryerson was the writer of the pastoral address of 1844, while he was the busiest man in the Province in relation to secular politics, and in yielding himself entirely to a secular party spirit. The Conference, as a body, is deeply immersed in this party spirit, which we have proved more than once. It is in vain that the Conference in this Pastoral address say, "With secular party politics we have nothing to do." "Our Conference could not be identified with any of the contending parties of the day." There is neither truth nor honesty in this declaration. At the present moment they have elected a President the person who said, *we will put out our feeler* when the elections come on, and the party that will give us most shall have our support. To contradict this many falsehoods have been uttered, but he dare not deny it now. In one sense, the Conference are neutral; they have nothing to do with the actual business of the political questions of the day truly, but they sell their political influence to that party which by their help proves the stronger. In another sense the Conference are one of the parties, and completely identified with the recent political agitation in the Province. We have only to refer to the last Minutes, and there we find Dr. Ryerson one of the committee appointed to confer with the Government. The Conference gave him all the assistance they could, and all they then durst do in the *Guardian*. He is now in Government employ, as the reward of his political writings. The Conference know also that they have offended all those in the church of opposite political opinions, and are fast driving them out of the church.

We can only notice, now, a feature in the character of this Pastoral Address, which we cannot designate more appropriately than to say, it is not honest and candid. They know the church is agitated throughout the Province, on the subject of Dr. Ryerson's political writings, wherein he has once more sacrificed principle and even truth to gain his ends; yet the Conference issue an address as if the church enjoyed the greatest degree of peace and prosperity, while they know it enjoys neither. The few words said about the decrease of 800 members, shows their reluctance to admit the truth; and for this cause, they cannot spare a word of regret for their loss, or suggest any mode of bringing them back. It is true they now propose to preach more on the offices and work of the Holy Spirit, and to urge prayer for the sacred gift; it is, however, in vain they preach and pray, if truth and honesty are disregarded. We predict a total failure of this and every other scheme, till the Conference give up their present false position.

TO THE REV. WM. POLLARD.

Sir.—Under your signature, in the *Guardian* of the 11th of June last, I notice a letter, professing to give an account of the state of the