

their Preachers deprived of their right to vote, who are not ordained according to the doctrines and discipline of their church.

This regulation carried into effect would secure the right to vote to all Preachers on trial, who, in the eye of the world and the law must be considered as clerical members of the community, who agreeably to the spirit of the law had no right to vote.

It would be absurd to attempt to force this distinction of the Conference on the return-officer; it would not be looked at for a moment. Why should the Conference be led so far into politics as to assume the right to dictate to the Executive Government, by interpreting an act of Parliament in its own favour? They have their Egerton Ryerson at the Governor's elbow, to see all right in the matter. If this is not a true way of accounting for the addition of the latter resolution, we request an explanation from those who can give one; and we shall be ready to qualify our present opinion accordingly. In noticing this disqualifying Act of Parliament, it is necessary to add, that we do not concur in the propriety or justice of it. We think that the deprivation of a vote personally, will have a tendency to make men more political than they otherwise would be. Having no direct personal influence they will endeavour to obtain it indirectly, and exercise it to the utmost extent. Perhaps this very enactment has had such an effect on the last election, as it formed a part of the grounds of complaint by Mr. Ryerson against the Reform Ministry. It has since been clearly proved that they had no more concern in it than Mr. Ryerson himself. We make this observation to shew another instance of the impropriety of his public interference in politics. He has charged the late Ministry with that which they had no concern in, and committed himself and the Conference, and the members to some extent, in opposition to truth—to the discredit of religion.

It was unwise, therefore, in the Conference to add the last of these resolutions, if they did not intend them to affect the elections—and if they did, it was unjust to one party, and a proof of their own interference in the politics of the day.

POLITICAL PREACHERS.

Extract from the Minutes of the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, held at Bristol, August 16, 1768:

Question—Shall itinerant Preachers follow trades?

*Answer—*This is an important question, and as it is the first time that it has come before us, it will be necessary to consider it thoroughly. The question is not whether they may occasionally work with their hands, as St. Paul did; but whether it be proper for them to keep shops, and follow merchandize. The plea that was urged for this was:—1. Necessity; 2. Doing more good. As to the first, Mr. Wesley promised to supply all their necessities. As to the second plea,—doing more good; it was inquired, is it not doing evil that good may come? Is not the thing in question both evil in itself (for us) and evil in its consequences? 1. Is it not with regard to the Travelling Preachers evil in itself? Is it well consistent with that Scripture, 2 Tim. 2. 4:—*No man that warreth (i. e. takes on him the profession of a soldier, as we eminently do) entangleth himself with the affairs of this life, plainly relating to the Roman Law, which forbids any soldier to follow any other profession. Is it well consistent with that word, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to teaching; meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them, 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15. Can we be said to give ourselves wholly to these things, if we follow another profession? Dura nota our Church in her office of*

ordination require every minister to do this? If they do it not, the more shame for them. We above all, should mind it, because every Travelling Preacher solemnly professes to have nothing else to do, and receives his little allowance for this very end. 2. Is it not evil in its consequences? Have not some ill consequences appeared already, and is there not the greatest reason to apprehend that still worse will follow? We are enjoined to give no offence either to Jew or Gentile, or to the Church of God. But this has already offended not only many of the world, but many of our own brethren. Many of the Preachers have been much grieved, yea, and those most alive to God. For if one Preacher follows trade, so may twenty; so may every one. And if any of them trade a little, why not ever so much, who can say how far he should go? Therefore we advise the Brethren who have been concerned hereto to give up all, and attend to the one business, and we doubt not that God will recompense him an hundred-fold, even in this world, as well as in the world to come." At the conference in 1770, it was agreed "that no Preacher, who would not relinquish his trade, &c., &c., should be considered a travelling Preacher any longer." From this time the evil was removed."

Though the interference in political controversy is not either mentioned or referred to, in the above extract, there are no scriptural authorities or reasons produced, why Preachers should not follow trades, but which equally prove that they should not interfere with political controversy.

There is no reason to believe that the same decision would not have been given in the same conference if there had been cause for it; but there was none.—It is not a practice with the Preachers in England to interfere in current party politics.—It never was. The few cases in which they have written on subjects which may be called political subjects, in some sense, are not even exceptions to this assertion. We would respectfully ask the Preachers of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, to apply these scriptures and reasons to the conduct of the Rev. Egerton Ryerson, and say if they can justify his conduct.

With regard to those portions of the scriptures referred to in the preceding extract from the English Conference, there is no question whatever that their application is as direct and unequivocal as language can make it. The reasons are equally so:—If Mr. Ryerson can take up the current politics of the day, and fill all the papers of the Province with his writings on public affairs, why may not twenty, nay, why may not all the Preachers do the same? If Mr. Ryerson may do so much, why may not all do a little in the same way? and if all may do a little, why may they not all do as much? Who (says the immortal Wesley) can tell how far he ought to go? We recommend the acceptance of this advice from their revered Founder, to the brethren in Canada—"to give up all, and attend to the one business." That the evil consequences mentioned in the foregoing extract have also happened in Canada, is shown by the following letter which appeared in the Provincial Papers a few months ago:—

[The Letter showing the injury inflicted deferred for want of space.]

From the St. Catharines Journal.

The first number of the "Toronto Periodical Journal, or Wesleyan Methodist," has appeared, and is to be continued till the next sitting of Conference, having for its object the obtaining from that body a strong declaration against the interference of its members with politics, and the bringing about of a lay representation therein—arising from Mr. Ryerson's conduct and the action of Conference upon it. On the first subject it says:—

"It is in the next session of Conference some declaration on this subject satisfactory to all the members of the Church, be not made, disorganizing 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."

It is stated of this journal, that "the profit if any, will be appropriated for the benefit of the church;" the church, we suppose, which is to result from Conference not making a "declaration" "satisfactory to all the members."

These are pretty strong signs of a schism in the Wesleyan body, and which we do not think there is sufficient reason for. Mr. Ryerson and his writings might be allowed an oblivion, and those who are offended at the past might seek quiet in the pale of another church—we believe in the Methodist New Connection the system of lay representation exists—without agitating the formation of a new sect, now so many as to be "past count."

The Editor of the St. Catharines Journal, in noticing the first appearance of our paper, makes the remarks inserted in the above extract. We are quite sure, that our esteemed contemporary, did not intentionally misrepresent us, as we know him to be incapable of doing so. If he will refer to our prospectus, he will find that the quotation is very unfairly made. The paragraph concluded with a short sentence, which, if attended to, rendered it impossible to deduce such consequences as he has from the language of that article. That sentence is—"A result exceedingly disastrous, and which our most strenuous efforts shall be made to prevent." We will thank our contemporary, to do us justice by inserting the whole of the paragraph referred to.

From the tenor of his remarks, we have an impression that our contemporary is not the author of them. They contain insinuations neither generous nor charitable—to the effect that the profits of our Journal, were to be appropriated for an intended Church, one not in existence. This is an inference not warranted by any language used by us, and, which we believe our cotemporary incapable of making. They contain also an indication of the resistance with which our demand is to be met, a subject we believe, which is a little out of his province. Neither would he, in our opinion, recommend a division of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, or an accession to the New Connexion. This irony of the writer, and those insinuations as to the honesty of our intention, bespeak a weak defence against the charges which truth and love for the church of our choice, render necessary to be made against some members of the Conference. We inform him, that we have every reason to believe, that we shall succeed in the object we have undertaken, with honesty of purpose, and on grounds of proved necessity.

A declaration must issue from the Conference, to satisfy the members of the church, and even the community generally, neither of whom will tolerate a political priesthood. Methodism must be delivered from this bane, both of civil and religious liberty, or, it will be the interest of the whole community, to wish the name of methodist, banished from the Province and forgotten.

LAY REPRESENTATION.

We commence the discussion of the propriety of introducing the principle of lay representation in the Wesleyan Methodist Conference, by offering the following propositions for the serious consideration of our readers. Some of them are self-evident.