

favour, no one at all conversant with our history can doubt. But if any one should be inclined to call this in question, the language of the *Christian Guardian*, of the 11th instant, will, I am sure, fully convince them. The Editor there remarks, "THE PRINCIPLE OF THE STATE FURTHERING THE GOSPEL IS NEVER COMPLAINED OF IN OUR COLUMNS." And it may not, perhaps, be generally known, that John Ryerson has of late, been specially commissioned to proceed to Montreal, thus to "further the Gospel," or rather, to look after what is more properly termed the secular interests of the Conference,—meaning, of course, the unsected grant of some £1,000 or £5,000,—an endowment to Victoria College;—and particularly a share of the Clergy Reserves! Here, Mr. Editor, is one of the main branches of the root of all our difficulties. Our preachers are already, under the present Constitution of the Church, quite independent of the membership except as to finances; but when the Government support is obtained, they will, in a great measure, be independent of them as to this particular also.

Need we, under such circumstances, be astonished, Sir, at the political corruption,—the hypocritical knesee,—the moral turpitude, which have sprung up from such a root; or at the disastrous results which may yet proceed to the Church, from a calm submission to the operation of principles so much opposed to the self-denying principles of the Gospel? It has been with us in reality, "a root bearing gall and wormwood."—we have realized the truth of the prophetic announcement, "because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." How truly, how extensively has this been experienced by the Methodist people in Canada! But I must bring my letter to a close, and, in doing so, I would remark, that my sole aim, in all my communications, has been to lend my humble influence to put down evils which have grown to an appalling magnitude in the Church. I am not sensible of having, in any instance, stated that which is contrary to truth, but have rigidly confined myself to matters which from time to time have come under my own observation, or which have come to my knowledge from respectable and authentic sources. I desire the most searching scrutiny into all that I have written, and I assure the parties implicated, that I will do so openly and freely acknowledge any error which may be fairly proved against me, either as to facts or deductions, as I have been fearless to express or expose them.

I remain, very respectfully,

A WESLEYAN METHODIST.

POLITICS AND PARTIES.

The above is the title prefixed to the resolutions of the last Conference, in relation to the public interference of the Ministers of Religion in the Politics of the day. These very resolutions, in our judgment, instead of settling an important question, raise the same question in such a manner as to excite an interest therein, never felt before in the Methodist Church. The following are the resolutions referred to:—

"POLITICS AND PARTIES."

"What is the judgment of this Conference in regard to our relation to the secular politics of the day?"

Resolved.—That while we disclaim all intention of controlling the political sentiments of any of our Ministers, or Members, so long as those sentiments do not contravene the Discipline of our Church, nor contradict the Word of God, we will not, as a body, be responsible for the political doctrines of any member or members of our Conference, or Church, or party in our country, but leave our people perfectly free to exercise their own judgment in Political and civil affairs.

Resolved.—That in view of the recent Act of the Legislature, prohibiting Clergymen and Ministers from voting at elections, no person in our church is recognised by this Conference as a Minister who has not been ordained by the imposition of hands according to our Doctrines, and Discipline."

We are constrained to make some remarks on these resolutions, in support of our opinion—that they do not meet the question, and that they give evidence of the political tendency of the mind of the Conference of an opposite character.

We first observe, that the above resolutions

are not merely the opinions of the Conference, but their decision on the question, and given in the solemn and official manner in which all their decisions are given.

Let us then look at what has been decided. We take up two passages which speak the same thing: "We disclaim all intention of controlling the political sentiments of any of our Ministers or Members, so long as these sentiments do not contravene the discipline of our church, nor contradict the Word of God." Allowing these two exceptions, what is the declaration? Simply this: We disclaim all intention of controlling the political sentiments of any of our Ministers or members. We ask, was this necessary to be decided by the Conference? Ought a question of the kind ever to arise? And, it having arisen, as we say, without necessity, it amounts to no more than a declaration that the Conference will not do what they have no right to do.

The other passage is merely a repetition of the former—we will "leave our people perfectly free to exercise their own judgment in political and civil affairs." Nothing, in our opinion, can justify the appearance of such disclaimers, but the well known existence of just grounds to conclude that the very opposite course has been attempted. The only other sentiment in the first resolution is "we will not as a body be responsible for the political doctrines of any member, or members of our Conference, or church, or party in the country." Taking away the latter clause of this part of the resolution as wholly irrelevant, we have the simple declaration that they are not responsible for the political doctrines of the members of the Conference and the Church.

We have declared that this resolution does not meet the question before the members of the church, or the public, in the least. One of the members of the Conference writes for six months, and fills all the papers in the Province with a defence of Sir C. Metcalfe, accompanied with the grossest abuse of the party opposed to him, one evident object being to influence the members of the church on his side of the question. The Church, and the public also, whom we believe have a voice in the question, call upon the Conference to make a declaration as to whether they are identified in the course of Mr. Ryerson; they admit the claim of the parties to an explanation, by giving the resolution in question. It is therefore either entirely evasive, or it decides the question; the latter we are inclined to conclude upon, for the following reasons:—

1st. The resolutions say, we are not responsible as a body for the political doctrines of members of the Conference and of the church.

What are political doctrines but political publications, intended to inculcate political principles? A person in the unmolested enjoyment of his private political opinions, cannot with propriety be said to have political doctrines: the essence of the expression is publication and teaching. If we are correct in our argument, the Conference is willing to permit the publication of political doctrines

by its members, but refuses as a body to be responsible for them. Whether they refuse to be responsible for them or not, they are so in the estimation of the public, and we believe of a majority of the members of the Church. We ask, Is the Conference responsible for the moral character of its members? Is it responsible for the efficiency of its members, in relation to their spiritual duties? They must say YES to these questions. How then can they say, we are not as a body responsible for the political doctrines of any member of our Conference or church, when the consequences of the interference of one of their members in political controversy, is both a depreciation of moral character and destructive of his efficiency as a preacher of the Gospel! Let any member of the Conference answer *this* if he can! This resolution involves the Conference in another contradiction. They have already decided that *The Christian Guardian*,—the organ of the Conference, shall not be a political journal,—while the individuals composing that Conference may interfere in the politics of the country in other journals, to any extent. Again, all of them together, or any of them, may not publish their political doctrines in their own paper; but every one separately, may fill all the papers in the Province with political articles.

This consequence undeniably follows, from allowing Mr. Ryerson to do so.

2ndly. It is evident that the decision of the Conference is in favour of Mr. Ryerson's conduct, from the pains taken to load the resolutions with the unnecessary declarations, that the Conference disclaim "all intention of controlling the political sentiments of any of our Ministers or members." Let us suppose the same question put before the Conference in England, in the presence of Mr. Wesley:—

Q. What is the judgment of this Conference in regard to the secular politics and parties of the day?

If the whole Conference did not stare with astonishment at the propounder, the answer would be, or perhaps shorter,—We have nothing to do with them. Look at the 11th of the twelve rules of a helper—

"You have nothing to do but to save souls."

This very rule is a part of the discipline of the Wesleyan Methodist church, and was, it seems, never thought of, but a merely irrelevant reply was given, which, if not decisive in favour of interference in politics, is not decisive against it.

3rdly. Because of the additional resolution, relative to the right to vote at elections. What reason is there for the Conference adding this article to a resolution on quite a different subject? We know of no other, than the existence, either of a tendency on their part to political interference, or a determination to support Mr. Ryerson's object; that, if he could not succeed in gaining the votes of the members, none should be lost to his side of the political question, if they could help it. Accordingly the public, and the officers of the Government appointed to execute a law of the Province, are told that the Methodist Conference will not consider any of