

and destructive of piety. "Let another man praise thee, and not thine own mouth; a stranger, and not thine own lips, is us appropriate, and needful an instruction to collective bodies, as to individuals. Let us see the man who is perfect in his own estimation, without spot or fault, who has no ears to listen to reproof—who re-vents every attempt of another to draw his attention to his faults, and we shall neither see a Christian, or a wise man; mostly we shall see an insufferable nuisance in society. The case is just the same in collective bodies. Besides, the world at large wants to hear less of Methodism, and to feel more of its evangelizing effects. It is not necessary for them to parade before them its excellencies, nor for Methodists to sound a trumpet before them. It is invidious in relation to other Christian communities, to be always dwelling on the sentiment "God is with us," as if it was intended to be read God is with us, in a specially eminent sense, more so than with others. Before boasting of this, if it were true, it should be remembered that he who has said—a bruised reed he will not break, or the smoking flax will he not quench—applying this sentiment to the fact, that God is with every degree of goodness wherever it is found, that to say that God is with us, is no more than every one may say for his encouragement, if he possess one good thought or desire. But if he rest in this consolation, and desire is not followed by obedient love, it is a vain boast and an awful delusion. The sentiment ought to be enlarged as we have suggested. "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him." This, while it gives encouragement, adds a necessary caution. May we not, with propriety therefore, request our Methodist public writers to say less about God being with us, but to take care to prove it,—less about our beloved Methodism, but to be determined to make it lovely. Let all the energies that Methodism has brought into such effective operation be roused, and kept up to their full vigor, in all the departments of our institutions, and it must be so; the world would then feel an immense moral and spiritual improvement, without hearing so much of the agent, and the glory be ascribed to God.

It is also very bad policy to be always beating the drum—making so much noise in the world, that more is really expected of us than we can do; hence the world is disappointed, and no credit is given for what may have been done.

Let us then keep the sentiment before us. "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him." How encouraging to be assured of this! He is with the baptized or unbaptized, with the Turk and the Christian, with the Jew and the Infidel; with all men without exception, who in uprightness incline to obey him. He will bring them health and cure. "Lo! I have seen his ways, I will heal him saith the Lord." And he is only with them, so long as they are with him. What an awfully interesting subject this ought to be to all, but especially to ministers of the Gospel. When the accursed thing entered the camp of Israel, though there was only one offender, the Lord left it, and immediately drew the sword on his own people. He is unchangeable, he must do so still in every case of sin.

The latter clause of the Scripture before us, is that which we have chiefly to notice—and to meditate on day and night. The first—that God is with us, while we are with him, is settled, safe

and eternally sure; we need not be anxious about it: the latter is our anxious, fearful, incessantly thoughtful charge. "Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his Commandments: for this is the whole of man."

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THE RIGHT TO PETITION.

On the subject of the right of the members of the Church to petition the Conference, the following strange resolution has been passed at the late session. It is in reply to a petition from Cobourg:—

"In answer to the Cobourg Memorial."

"Resolved,—That while there is nothing on the journals of the Conference guaranteeing to the laity the right to petition, yet there is nothing in the constitution or usages of the Church depriving the membership of the privilege; and the Conference will, therefore, at all times receive such memorials and petitions as may be respectfully expressed."

"As it respects the medium of conveyance, we consider any member, or number of members of the Church have the undoubted right to present a petition, address, or memorial to the Conference, through any medium they may think proper; while, at the same time, we know of no law or usage of our Church, making it the duty of a member of the Conference, or any other person, to be the bearer of any petition or memorial to the Conference, or elsewhere, unless at his own option."

We have remarked that this is a strange resolution, and the more we look at it, the more are we astonished that any set of men could be found sitting to produce such a mass of words both superfluous and contradictory; the object of which could only be to throw the question into confusion,—to admit the right, and thereby gain the reputation of some degree of liberality; and, at the same time, to put every difficulty in the way of the exercise of that right. Who would expect to find, in the journals of the Conference, the guarantee of the right to petition? And if, on searching those journals, nothing was found either for or against that right, why were the journals mentioned?

We contend that neither the guarantee of that right nor a deprivation of it ought to be found there. On Methodist principles, the quarterly meetings appoint ministers to labour among them in the Gospel, in the first instance; consequently, the same authority has an inherent right, not, perhaps, so much to petition, as to control the Conference,—to call them to account for their conduct. Where there is power to make, there is power to superintend and regulate.

On New Testament principles, Ministers are not absolute lords, but the servants of the Church of God. This pretended concession of the right to petition is an assumption of power, in opposition to the Scriptures; it is the very essence of Popery. Take this away from the system of Popery, and there remains nothing not removeable and curable in the institutions of that Church. Add this to any Church, no matter by what name it is called, and antichrist rules in that Church.

On moral principles, ministers have no right to assume absolute authority over the Church, as they are paid for their labour; the buyer and the seller are equally responsible to each other. We make these remarks, because, even the act of conceding the right to petition, implies absolute power on the part of the conceding party.

The second clause of the resolution admits the right to petition, but embarrasses its exercise by declaring that it

is optional with a minister or any other person to be the bearer of it. This simply informs us that if we cannot procure a bearer for our petition it cannot be sent. Surely, it was not intended that the time of the Conference should be thus wasted in making a formal resolution of this nature.

We suspect it is a sort of *post facto* law, to help the President of the Conference out of the difficulty he placed himself in, by suppressing the memorial of the Toronto City Quarterly Meeting last year. But there is no analogy between the case as stated in this resolution, and that of the suppressed memorial. The President of the Conference was under no obligation to take charge of that memorial; it might have been sent by other means. But when he made himself a party to it, by suggesting the strongest part of it,—the *Postscript*,—and when he expressed his desire "to be sent strong to Conference," he was under a *strong* moral obligation to lay it before the Conference, and even to plead in favour of it.

Being well acquainted with the peculiarities of Methodism, we suspect another object of this resolution to be to prevent Ministers in future being *officially* parties to sending memorials to Conference. By the word *officially*, we mean that as presiding over the Quarterly Meeting, they shall have nothing to do with petitions,—they shall not offer a resolution for the approbation of the meeting on the subject; thus is the right of petition quashed at once. You may petition is the ironical concession; but no preacher shall sanction a petition, is the condition of it; and without that sanction, it will be unofficial, and of course inadmissible to the Conference. If this is not the object of this part of the resolution, it must be the effect of it in all cases where the object of the petitioners is not agreeable to the Preachers. We conclude that the right to petition is denied, the power to do so is implied in the assumption of conceding it; for, if the Conference can grant, they can withhold. It is implied in the guileful and disengenuous language of this resolution, which affords another instance of the machinery of Methodism being managed by artful, special pleading and crafty expedients.

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THE MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

In a former number, we pointed out the objectionable construction of the Missionary Society, or rather, showed that there was no such Society in existence, for want of that organization which could give it an existence, distinct from that of the Conference, or that of the membership at large. We now learn from the *Guardian* of June 25th, that a new constitution has been formed, the nature of which will, doubtless, appear in the next annual Missionary report. So far, our complaint in relation to this subject, is justified. We have no further remark to make now, than to notice, that, on the occasion of rescinding the old, and adopting a new constitution, for anything revealed to the public, there was no meeting of the Missionary Society held for that purpose, the parties present being only the Ministers who transacted the business. We always thought the Missionary Society consisted of its subscribers, and, according to the old constitution, all subscribers of £1 and upwards were eligible to vote for