

TORONTO PERIODICAL JOURNAL.

OR, WESLEYAN METHODIST.

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

VOL. I.

TORONTO, MARCH, 1845.

No. 3.

For the *Globe*

LETTER FROM A MEMBER OF THE METHODIST CHURCH, ADDRESSED TO THE WESLEYAN METHODISTS OF CANADA.

I am much pleased to see by *The Globe* of July 16th 1844, that our Church at Toronto have expressed their dissent from the course taken by Mr. Ryerson. This is as it ought to be. I sincerely hope that it will be responded to from all parts of the Province. My mind has been in prey to the most restless anxiety ever since the announcement of his unholy purpose; not but Mr. Ryerson has a right, like all other men, to his own views of the policy of Government, but I have yet to be convinced of the propriety of a Minister of the Gospel leaving his holy calling, at the bidding of any man, to combat in the angry field of politics, and more especially so, when the subject has assumed such a furious spirit as at present.

What is to become of our Church God only knows. I am lost, not in wonder, love, and praise, but in astonishment, to see our present degraded condition. We are made the sport of every wind. But a short time ago, we were openly insulted by Sir John Colborne, because some of our members interferred in the then politics of the day, now it appears to be a day of trouble with the Government, and our interest is wanted! And how are our favors solicited? By the most dishonourable and mischievous means possible, *i. e. Bribe the Ministers, and the flock must follow.*

This is the only legitimate construction that can be put on the attempt; and is, in my humble opinion, the greatest indignity ever offered to the Society in Canada. Had the attempt to deceive us been made in a fair open manner—had a proper person been employed, and *reason*, instead of threats and deception, used as the means, the affront had not been so wicked and glaring; but no! the *known love* which we bear to our spiritual teachers, is made the handle of this business; and we are to be led blind-folded on to the tread-wheel to work our destruction.

What will the world think of us—what can we think of ourselves? unless we resist this and all other attempts, whether openly or covertly, made, to make a tennis ball of our Society.

I rue the day and repent in dust and ashes, that ever our Church received a single cent from the Government, either for building churches or supporting ministers. Better, and more glorious in the sight of Him, "who sees not as man sees," had our songs of praise ascended *free* from our humble dwellings, then fettered with the trammels of State, in stately buildings *then* were our holy aspirations, "praise to God in the highest." Now, our Ministers for "the wages of unrighteousness" leave the altar of the living God to minister in the temple of Baal, and join the heathen cry, "Great is Diana, of the Ephesians and Sir Chas. Metcalfe!!"

Alas how fallen! I call upon you who "have not yet defiled your garments," who have battled the winter storms, and encountered, without murmuring, the scorching heat of summer, to find the isolated settlement—the little school house, there to meet a few hearts, true as your own, and faithful to their Divine Master. I call upon you to remember the little class, when every eye glistened with the water which flowed from the throno of God in their hearts, and every tongue silent, save the broken aspirations of "Abba Father, my Lord and my God!" I call upon you to contrast these soul-stirring scenes, with our present lamentable situation, when *he*, whose duty it was to set an example of goodness and true holiness, has left his little flock and entered the political arena as chief gladiator to fight for the amusement of the great.

Should the effects of this contaminating example extend to our young preachers, and through them to the more ignorant and unthinking of the flock—for this is the tendency of it, where are we? We become the scorn and laughing stock of the world! Behold, say the contemptuous, your leader is sold, and the society must follow.

Already see the diminished stature of the Rev. Gentleman, returning from the field of strife, bruised, confused, and rendered ridiculous. Where now that dignified air—that calm commanding look—that venerable piety—lost, all lost in the battle of an unglorious strife; and the only consolation of the renegade is, that he has been assisting a party who would annihilate him and his church, if their power was equal to their inclinations.

PROSPECTS OF ANOTHER UNION.

"Except the Lord build the house they labour in vain that build it." We have it from good authority, that another union, between the Wesleyan Methodist Church and the British Conference, is both contemplated and desired; and what will, perhaps, astonish our readers, desired by some of the very individuals who, on the occasion of the dissolution of the union that formerly subsisted, gloried in their independence of the British Conference. Thus it is that they completely justify the conduct of those Ministers who withdrew from the Canada Conference on that occasion.

We do not draw attention to this subject for the purpose of noticing this comparatively trifling inconsistency, but with a view of pointing out the still greater danger impending in the event of another union—of the Wesleyan Methodist Church becoming more completely and permanently an instrument for the exercise of political influence on the people, in favour of the Government, whatever character that Government may be, or the principle of value received in State support.

We shall proceed to show our opinion of the way in which this object is to be effected by the union said to be contemplated.

It has been told us, in accompaniment with the communication of the fact of the approaching union, that we are to have a union on independent and liberal principles. The projected union is to form part of a summation proceeding in relation to the Methodists of Lower Canada, Nova Scotia, and New Brunswick, and we might add, by way of conjecture, to be followed by a similar proceeding in relation to the Colonial Methodists, in every part of the world, as soon as each separate body has assumed the necessary stability and importance. This, or three, unions are to admit of independent Conferences, in each place, united to the main body in England, by the simple connection of their sending a President to each. Of this plan we have much to say, with reference to an unqualified condemnation of it. We assert that they would not be independent Conferences: separate they might be: they would be under the control, not of the British Conference, but of the Missionary Committee of the British Conference. This union would ravel the claims of slavery, in relation to civil and religious privileges, of all the members of the Methodist Churches in the world, except of those who live under foreign government, and would, doubtless, affect other denominations of Christians, in relation to both their civil and religious privileges.

The effect of this union would be, to place agents of the British Missionary Committee at the head of each Conference. These agents would all be supplied from those preachers who had been generally under the orders of that Committee, men pledged, or rather bound in the strongest manner, to implicit obedience to that Committee—men who are bound, body and soul, to that Committee, for life, except they escape the bondage, and provide better for themselves, as we believe some of them have done in stations most distant from England—men for whom there is no salvation in this world, if they disobey the Missionary Committee, whatever they may allow them to hope for in the next.

As some of our readers may require a little more information on this subject, we take the opportunity to say that there are two classes of preachers in England, distinct in many important requisites of ministerial character, while both may be correctly styled Methodist Ministers. The one class composes the great body of Ministers who labour in England, and who are subject to the Conference only.—The others are the Missionaries, and those who have been Missionaries; the last of whom ultimately merge in the former class. These are, and have been subject to the Missionary Committee, from their first engagement of implicit obedience, and from habits acquired on foreign stations, where they are on a footing with the Clergy of the Church of England, and by intercourse with the higher class of Europeans resident abroad, they become a totally different class of people from the Methodist Preachers in England. The former mix with the middle and lower classes in England,

under the influence of the people in some respects than of the Conference, and are independent of the Missionary Committee who are merely their equals.

There would be little objection to such men preaching in Colonial Conferences.

The latter, mix with another class of people as before stated,—are agents of the Missionary Committee, entirely subservient, and who in many respects, interfere in political affairs in the countries where they are sent for spiritual labour as Missionaries. The latter would be sent to preside in Colonial Conferences. These are the class of persons that have been sent to exhibit in their example and preaching and general government of the Churches, a fac-simile of English Methodism. They have not done this, and are not able.—It is impossible; many of them never resided in England twelve months after they became preachers, and consequently, had no practical experience of Methodism in England. Hence the difference of opinion on many subjects between Members of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in this Province, who have been Members of the Society for some time in England, and those who have not. The former well know that Methodism as conducted under the one class of preachers in England, is a very different thing from the same system, so called, conducted by the Missionaries of the same body. We point out this distinction for the purpose of showing the fallacy of the argument which we have no doubt will be used on the occasion, in favour of the contemplated union. It will be plausibly stated that there will be greater security for the efficiency, uniformity, unity, and permanency of Methodism throughout the world, if all the Methodists subject to the government of Great Britain are united under one head, or are comprised in one only Methodist Ministers, it will be plausibly said, preside over independent Conferences in every Colony in the Empire.

We cannot imagine that such an union is contemplated with reference to any advantage to Canada. Neither the interests of Canada or any of the Colonies will ever be consulted on the occasion. The object of such union has reference to England only. There, the Methodist body has attained to great influence, and even to political importance. The questions of slavery and national education prove this.

Their influence in England can decide the question whether the national establishment, as to stand or fall, the British Government will, doubtless give a fair price to obtain this influence in support of the Established Church. The Government will consequently aid the Methodist body in England in consolidating their strength by Colonial unions, by which the influence of the Methodist body in England is increased, and that of the government in the Colonies at the same time. It is well known that Governors of Colonies are subject to the Colonial Office, and if the Colonial Office is subject to the Missionary Committee of the Methodists in England, the subservieny of the Methodists to the government in all the Colonies through their respective Presidents, sent by the Missionary Committee is complete.

We call on the Methodists of Canada to enquire into this subject, and to insist on having a voice in the question as to what Church they shall belong to. We shall wonder if an attempt should be made to effect another union without consulting them. If the principle of lay representation were in operation, there would be neither difficulty or danger in meeting the question of a proposal for Union of the kind we have described, as we are persuaded the lay members of the Church in Canada, are in general, better acquainted with their own interests than parties in England.

We are astonished even in contemplating the amazing power this system of Colonial union would give to the Methodist body in England and to the several Colonial Conferences. Not a preacher would be sent out who had not first given his adhesion to their doctrine of implicit obedience—they would without exception be all of the ultra Tory School in mind and in politics. They would be dispersed through the Colonies, and be so many effective agents of the home establishment, to work into full effect the designs of their masters whether Imperial or Colonial. We know of no precedent to such a system but that of Ignatius Loyola. We trust that the Methodists of Canada, would not countenance the introduction of such a system, but they surely will, if they consent to another union with the British Conference. We trust that our contemporaries of the Press, the religious organs of their respective denominations, will oppose the advent in Canada of such a monstrous, civil and religious tyranny, which must affect every one in the Colony.

We can of course have no notion what the nature of Dr. Ryerson's impressions may be, after his return from