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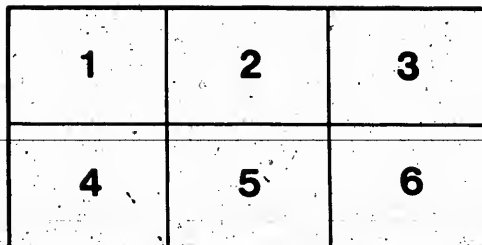
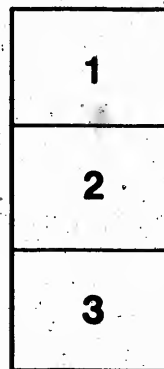
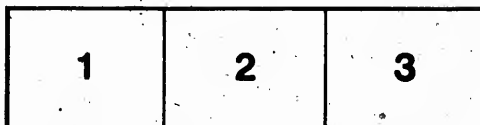
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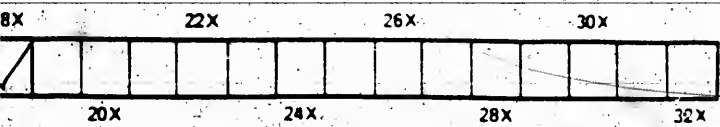
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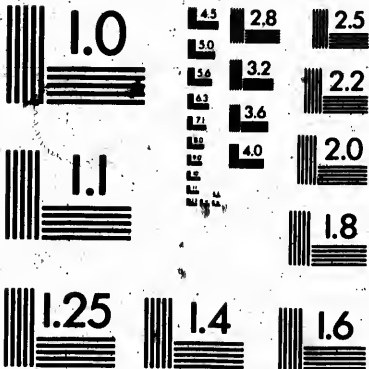
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A

LETTER TO A METHODIST.

BY A PRESBYTER

OF THE DIOCESE OF MARYLAND, UNITED STATES.

PART II.

**OBJECTIONS TO THE PRINCIPLES AND POLITY
OF THE METHODIST SOCIETY.**

**RE-PUBLISHED
FOR THE CHURCH SOCIETY OF THE DIOCESE OF TORONTO,
AT THE DIOCESAN PRESS,
COBOURG.**

1844.

LETTER TO A METHODIST.

PART II.

II. The next point, concerning which you desire written information, is respecting the objections you have heard me make to the principles and polity of the "Methodist Church." Now, inasmuch as I have proved the said "Church" to be destitute of a lawful ministry and the sacraments, and therefore to be no Church at all, it may seem somewhat incongruous to object to any thing *within* it, or pertaining to it. But as the consideration of some particulars will go to strengthen my argument, by showing this "Church" to be utterly *unscriptural*, (and, therefore, no Church in any point of view), I shall, as you request it, make a few observations respecting it.

And, 1. I object to the "Methodist Church," that it is not such a Church as *Christ* established.

The "Methodist Church," or Society, is described in the "Book of Discipline," (page 79), as a "*company of men having the form and seeking the power of godliness, united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their salvation.*" In other words, the Methodist Church is composed of only *religious* men, or *religiously disposed* men.

Now, such a Church as *this* is directly contrary to that which *Christ* established! and, therefore, *cannot* be *Christ's* Church, whatever else it may be.

In the 13th chapter of St. Matthew, Christ (speaking of it under the appellation of "the kingdom of heaven") has said, that *His Church* was like a net, in which were caught fishes both *good* and *bad*; and they "gathered the *good* into vessels, but cast the *bad* away." "So," he adds, "shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the *wicked* from the just, and shall cast them into the furnace of fire."

In the same chapter, (under the same appellation of "the kingdom of heaven") Christ declares *His Church* as a field, wherein *tares* were sown with the *wheat*,—that the *tares* were to remain until the harvest, when they were to be burned, but the *wheat* was to be saved. And the meaning of this harvest, and the burning of the *tares*, and the saving of the *wheat*, Christ thus explains: "The *harvest*, is the end of the world." "The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and THEM WHICH DO INIQUITY, and shall cast them into a furnace of fire;" "then shall the *righteous* shine forth in the kingdom of their Father."

In accordance, then, with the express declarations of Christ, *His Church* is to be composed of the *wicked*, as well as the *good*; and the *wicked* are to remain in the Church with the *good* until "the end of the world," when the angels of God will separate them.

And such we find the Church described to be, in the New Testament. Judas Iscariot was a member of the Church; so were Ananias and Sapphira, who were struck dead for *lying* to the Holy Ghost; so was Simon Magus—all of them *wicked* persons yet members of the Church.

St. Paul addresses his first Epistle to the Corinthians, "unto the Church, which is at Corinth; to them that are *sanctified* in Christ Jesus, called to be saints." (chap. i. 2.) And yet he reproves them for being

contentious, (chap. i. 11, 12, &c.) He tells them that they are "carnal,"—that is, under the influence of the *flesh*, and not of God's spirit; (chap. iii. 3,) that there was "fornication" among them, and that they were "puffed up at it," and *gloried* in it, (chap. v. 1, 2, 6.) He reproves them, because their meeting together was for the *worse*, and not for the *better*, because there were *divisions* among them, and because they profaned the Lord's Supper by getting *drunk* at it! (chap. xi. 17, &c.) Various other parts of the New Testament might be quoted for the same purpose, and especially the Epistles to the seven Churches of Asia, in *Revelations*, chap. ii. and iii.—all going to show, that Christ's description of His Church was true to the very letter; that it was to be composed of *wicked* men mixed with the *good*. The Methodist notion of a Church, that is composed only of "*men, having the form, and seeking the power of godliness,*" is a delusion, and is directly contrary to the Scriptures. No such Church; as the "Methodist Church" is described to be, is to be found in Holy Scripture. It is not the Church of Jesus Christ.

2. In the second place, I object to the "Methodist Church," as being contrary to the Scriptures, because they make membership thereof consist in *joining a class!* A thing utterly unknown to the Scriptures.

Baptism is the only rite of initiation into the Church of God. This appears expressly by what St. Paul has declared in his Epistles:—"There is one LORD, one faith, *one baptism,*" (Eph. iv. 5.) "*by which we are all baptized into one body,*" (1 Cor. xii. 13.) "*which body is THE CHURCH,*" (Col. i. 18.)

The "Book of Discipline" says, (page 84.) "*Let none be received into the Church, until they are recommended by a [class] leader, with whom they have met at least six months on trial, and have been baptized; and shall on examination by the minister in charge, before*

the Church, give satisfactory assurances both of the correctness of their Faith, and their willingness to observe and keep the rules of the Church."

If, then, a man have met with a class-leader six months; if he have been *baptized*; if he have stood a satisfactory examination; if he be willing to observe and keep the rules of "the Church,"—he may be admitted into the "Methodist Episcopal Church!" *How?* By *baptism*, as the Scripture directs? Not at all. He *has* been baptized already, and is not a member yet! What, then, is to be done? *How* is he to be a member of this "Methodist" Church?—*By putting his name down in a class-book.*

And as a man gains admittance into this "Methodist" Church, *by putting his name down in a class-book*, so, if he refuse to attend the meeting of the class afterwards, he is to be *excluded* from the Church—he is no longer to be a member!!

The Book of Discipline, (page 85,) says:

"Question 5. What shall we do with those members of our Church who wilfully and repeatedly neglect to meet their class?"

"Answer 1. Let the elder, deacon, or one of the preachers, visit them, whenever it is practicable, and explain to them the *consequence* if they continue to neglect, viz., **EXCLUSION**."

"2. If they do not amend, let him who has the charge of the circuit, or station, bring their case before the society, or a select number, before whom they shall have been cited to appear; and if they be found guilty of wilful neglect by a decision of a majority of the members, before whom their case is brought, let them be **LAI**D **A**SIDE, and let the preachers show that they are **EXCLUDED** for a breach of our rules, and not for *immoral* conduct."

Thus it appears that, though a member of the "Methodist Church" should attend their *public wor-*

ship regularly and punctually; though he should be constant at their communion table; though he should live a pure and upright life—yet it all goes for nothing; he has committed the *mortal sin* of not attending a class-meeting!! and for *that*, he is to be *laid aside*—*excluded*—shut out from all the privileges of the Church of God!! Was such a doctrine as *this* ever heard before? Was it ever before heard, that a man was to be refused *admittance* into the Church of God (for such the “Methodist Church” professes to be) unless he joined a *class*; or, that he was to be laid aside—*excluded* from her privileges and her hopes, if he refused to attend a *class-meeting*? Was such a thing as this, I say, ever heard of, until the Methodists made the discovery? Tell it not in *Galath*! What is this, but to set these class-meetings *above* the public worship of God? *above* his sacraments? *above* every other means of Grace? *above* a holy life? And, assuredly, such is the fact, as I have above shown; since, unless he join a *class*, and attend its *meetings*, everything else a man does, or can do, avails him not an iota!! And yet, in the face of this startling fact, the “Book of Discipline” tells us, (page 83,) that God’s *written Word* “is the *only* rule; and the sufficient rule, both of our *faith and practice*.” Now, as the Bible is thus declared to be the “*only* rule” of the Methodist *practice*, I would be glad to know—the Methodists would be glad to know—the world would be glad to know—where, in the whole Bible, it is declared, that we become “members” of the Church of God by *joining a class*, or that we are to be “*excluded*”—shut out—from the Church of God, for refusing to attend a *class-meeting*? Let the question be answered. Let there be no blinking of the question. Let your readers come out like men, and point out wherein the Bible authorizes any *practice* like this!—Or, if they cannot, let them acknowledge that the

Bible—that God's "written Word" is *not* the Methodist rule of *practice*; and that thousands, and tens of thousands, have been and are deluded, by thinking they have joined the Church of God, when they had their names entered in a Methodist class-book!!

As this is a subject of very great importance, and as the salvation of multitudes may depend upon the proper understanding of it, (for there is no salvation *promised* to any human being *out* of the Church of God,) you will excuse me, if I take the liberty of enquiring into the *origin* of these "classes."

Mr. Lee, in his "History," (page 15,) makes the following statement: "In 1742, the societies having greatly increased, they were divided into *classes*, each class consisted of about twelve persons, who were committed to the care of one person styled the Leader. Mr. Wesley observes, on this occasion, as follows:

"Feb. 15, 1742. Many of us were met together in *Bristol*, to consult on a proper method of paying the public debt contracted by *building*; and it was agreed, 1. That every member of the society that was able, should contribute a penny a week. 2. That the whole society should be divided into little companies, or *classes*, of about twelve in each class. 3. That one person, in each class, should receive the contribution of the rest. Thus *begun*, says he, that excellent institution, merely upon a temporal account."

Watson, who is a standard author with the Methodists, in his "Life of Wesley," (page 96,) confirms this statement of Mr. Wesley's. Watson says:

"The *origin* of these classes was, however, purely *accidental*. The Chapel at Bristol was in debt; and it was agreed, that each member of the society should contribute one penny a week to reduce the burden. The Bristol society was, therefore, divided into *classes*;

and, for convenience, *one* person was appointed to collect the weekly subscriptions from each class, and to pay the amount to the stewards.*

Such was the *origin* of class-meetings!! a mere scheme for raising money!! And yet, this money-raising scheme of Wesley's is now made to usurp the place of one of Christ's sacraments—for *Baptism* is no longer the door of admission into the Church of God, but the joining of one of Wesley's classes!!—And there are thousands, and tens of thousands, as I have said, who have been deluded into believing that, when they *joined* one of these "classes" they were actually joining "the Church of the living God," (1 Tim. iii. 15,) which Christ purchased with his own blood!! (Acts xx. 28.) Had this thing been invented 800 years ago, in what are called the "dark ages," it might have been little to be wondered at; but that, in the 19th century—in this "most enlightened age the world has ever seen,"—multitudes of men could be found, who have been brought to *believe* that they join the Church of God, when they put their names down in a *class* book, is, to me, a matter of profound astonishment. We look at those with wonder and amazement, who have been led to believe in the Golden Bible of the Mormons; but I would as soon believe *that*, as to believe, that I was joining the Church of God, when I joined one of these classes which Wesley formed to raise money to pay off the debt of a meeting-house!! You, my friend, have long belonged to one of these "classes;" let me beg and entreat you, as you value your immortal soul, to open your eyes to the delusion under which you have been labouring, in thinking that you joined the Church of God, when

* Even at the *present day*, it is, among other things, the duty of *class* leaders, once a week, "to pay the stewards what they have received of their several classes in the week preceding." (Book of Discipline, pages 79 and 80.)

you "joined class." Be assured, that there is no *promise* of salvation, *out* of the Church of God, to any human being; and be equally assured, that you do *not* join the Church of God, by joining one of Wesley's classes.

3. I object, in the third place, to the "Methodist Church," as being *unscriptural*, because it excludes *infants* from being members of the Church of God.

Of this fact, there can be no doubt. I have shown that *Baptism* does not confer membership in the "Methodist Church,"—nothing but the entering one's name in a class-book, after six months' trial, an examination, &c. Of course, infants *cannot* become members, because they cannot and do not join a *class*!! Methodist *Baptism* (as it is called) is a mere idle ceremony—the giving of a *name* to the child, and nothing more.

On this point, I very much fear, Methodist parents have been kept in the dark. They have not been trusted with the dreadful secret; that their infant offspring are not members of the Church of God!—Nor is this to be wondered at, for what parent would remain for twenty-four hours a member of a society, which cuts off his *children* from the blessings and privileges which Christ has purchased, with His blood, for His Church?—and all, because the unconscious babes cannot join one of Wesley's classes!!

4. The last objection, I shall mention, to the "Methodist Church," is their unscriptural doctrine, that an *inward call* gives them a right to exercise the ministry of the Lord Jesus.

To this, I object, (1.) that there is not an instance in the whole Scriptures, where any man undertook to act as a minister of God, because he had an "inward call" to do so. On the contrary, some of the most eminent servants of God, we know had no "inward call."

Moses, the most distinguished prophet mentioned in Scripture, had no "inward call;" because, when God called him to go to Pharaoh, he refused to go.—(Exodus, chap. iv.)

Samuel had no "inward call;" because, when God called him to be a prophet in Israel, he was only three years old; and, of course, was ignorant of the nature of the prophetic office. (1 Sam. chap. iii.)

David had no "inward call;" because he had no intimation of his high destiny until Samuel called him; and "from *that day* the Spirit of God came upon him." (1 Sam. xvi.)

Jeremiah had no "inward call;" because, when God called him, he endeavoured to plead off, saying he was but "a child." (Jer. i.)

Jonah had no "inward call;" because he ran off when God called him to prophesy against Nineveh.—(Jonah i.)

The *Twelve Apostles* had no "inward call;" because they were entirely ignorant of the nature and end of the office to which Christ called them. They were also ignorant of the nature of the Gospel, and supposed Christ was about to establish a *temporal* kingdom; and this delusion, it would seem, they lay under, to the very last hour of Christ's abode upon earth! (Acts i. 6.)

St. Paul had no "inward call;" because he was persecuting the Church at the very time when Christ called him to be an Apostle. (Acts ix.)

All these highly favoured servants of the Most High were "called" to the sacred office, either by God's own mouth, or else by one of His *authorized* servants. When he condescended to call them by "word of mouth," God invariably gave them the power of working miracles, or of foretelling future events, so that mankind might certainly *know* that he had called them. The notion of an "inward call" is unknown to the

Scriptures, and is the invention of those, who, not having been appointed to the sacred office by any lawful authority, have resorted to this expedient to claim to have one immediately from God himself.

We object (2.) to this doctrine as being *unscriptural*, because it is in opposition to the teaching of St. Paul. In the fifth chapter of the Hebrews, speaking of the ministerial office, he says, "*No man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*" How was Aaron called? By an "inward" call? No. He was called by the mouth of Moses, an *authorized* minister of God: so that, to be called by an authorized minister, is to be "called of God."

To this, perhaps, some Methodist preacher might answer, that, when St. Paul says, "Aaron was called of God," he meant that Aaron had an "inward call." To this, I reply, (1.) That we have precisely the same record of Aaron's "call" before us, which St. Paul had before him, which record is as follows:

God said to Moses, "*And take thou unto thee Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him, from among the children of Israel, that he may minister unto me in the Priests' office.*" (Exodus xxviii. 1.)

God then commands Moses to make certain holy garments, and said, "*Thou shalt put them upon Aaron thy brother, and his sons with him; and shalt anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister unto me in the Priests' office.*" (Ex. xxvii. 41, xl. 13.) And in reference to this consecrating, &c., of Aaron, "*Thus did Moses: according to all that the Lord commanded him, so did he.*" (Ex. xl. 16.) Thus was Aaron "called,"—"anointed,"—"consecrated,"—"sanctified,"—for the priest's office by Moses. There is not a word mentioned about an, "inward" call.

I reply, (2.) That Aaron *could not* have had an "inward" call, because the institution of the Aaronic

priesthood was as yet in the Divine mind; it had not been as yet revealed to mankind; Aaron, consequently, knew nothing of it; and when God gave the command to Moses to "call" and "consecrate" Aaron, Moses was alone with God upon Mount Sinaï. Aaron, therefore, *could not* have had an "inward" call to perform duties of which he was entirely ignorant, and which had not as yet been revealed. The construction, therefore, I have given to the words of St. Paul is correct, that when Aaron was called by Moses, God's authorized minister, he was "called of God," and every pretence for an "inward call" is shut out.

But,

I reply, (3.) That even if Aaron had had an "inward" call, (which I have proved to be impossible,) still it availed him nothing, until he was *outwardly* called to the priesthood by God's *authorized* minister, Moses; so that this favourite doctrine—even if it were true—of their having an "inward call," avails the Methodists nothing, until this "inward call" they lay claim to, is *ratified* by the *outward* call of an *authorized* minister of God—and this is precisely what the Methodists have not got. When they get *that*, they will then be "called of God, as was Aaron," but not until then.

This doctrine, that the act of God's *authorized* minister is the act of *God himself*, is, I know, a very unpalatable doctrine to the Methodists. It strikes at the very root of their ministry, and they are fully aware of it. Nevertheless, it is eminently a Scripture doctrine: no doctrine stands out more prominently than this in the Word of God. I shall give a few instances of it, just to satisfy your mind upon the subject; and, first, with respect to this very case of Aaron,

God says, "I will *sanctify* both Aaron and his sons, to minister to me in the Priests' office." (Ex. xxix. 44.)

God says to Moses, "And thou shalt put upon Aaron the holy garments, &c., and sanctify him, that he may minister unto me in the Priests' office."—(Ex. xl. 13.) "And Moses took of the anointing oil, &c., and sanctified Aaron, and his sons with him."—(Lev. viii. 30.)

Thus the act of Moses was the act of God himself. God "sanctified" Aaron for the priesthood by the hands of Moses, His *authorized* minister.

Another instance, in 1 Sam. chap. xvi. Samuel, the prophet, called David from the sheep-cote, and made him king of Israel; but in 2 Sam. chap. vii. God says to David, "I took thee from the sheep-cote, from following the sheep, to be ruler over my people, over Israel." Thus, the act of Samuel was the act of God, because Samuel was His authorized minister.

Again, Christ, speaking of marriage, says, "*Those whom God hath joined together, let no man put asunder.*" God does not marry people; but when marriages are celebrated by His "authorized" ministers, then it is God's act; it is He who joins them together, and marriage becomes a "great mystery," a type of the union between Christ and His Church. (Eph. v.)—When an *unauthorized* minister celebrates a marriage, it may be a *legal* marriage, since it is permitted by the laws of the land; but such a marriage is not God's act; He does not join the parties together; it is not a type of Christ's union with His Church, neither is it "a great mystery."

Again, "The Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John; though Jesus himself baptized not, but his *disciples*," (John iv. 1, 2.) Here, the act of the disciples in baptizing is the act of Christ, because it was performed by His *authorized* ministers. And this is just the difference between a *lawful* and an *unlawful* baptism. When Christ's "authorized" ministers baptize, it is Christ who bap-

sizes, and the infant is then "born of water and the Spirit," and is admitted into the kingdom of God; when an "unauthorized" minister presumes to baptize, it is only *his own baptism*—it is a mere ceremony—the form of giving a *name* to the child, and nothing more: no spiritual benefit results from it to the child. And surely, it is a great comfort to know, that amid the imperfections of even His "lawful" ministers, our baptism, though "by man," is not "of man;" that to whomsoever Christ may have committed the ministry of His sacrament, Himself it is, that retaineth and sendeth forth its power.

If it were necessary, I could add a hundred such instances from the Bible, all going to show, that it is *there* a prominent and oft-repeated doctrine, that the act of God's *authorized* minister is the act of God himself. And of one thing we may rest satisfied, that if ever God should so deviate from the ordinary course of His Providence, as to give a man an "inward call," (as it is termed,) to the ministerial office, He will provide the *means* by which he is to enter it—He will send him to one of His *authorized* ministers for ordination.

But here, perhaps, some one may ask, "Does not every minister in the Protestant Episcopal Church profess to have an 'inward call,' when he says, at his ordination, that *he trusts he is inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost* to undertake the sacred office?" I shall answer this question in the words of a living writer: "Solemn and important as this inquiry is, it will not justify the conclusion, that the Church here expects in the candidate a direct, special, and evident 'call' to the work of the ministry; for, if this were so—if there were this special revelation to the mind of the candidate, the Church and its Bishop would be bound to submit to it, and every such person could demand ordination, however apparent his disqualifications.—"

Besides, as no sensible proof of the call could be given, the Bishop would be compelled to rely on the mere word of the candidate, and thus be exposed to every kind of deception from those, who ignorantly mistake the working of their own imaginations for the impulses of the Spirit of God. In the question proposed, the Church recognizes the truth, that all holy dispositions—every good thought and religious purpose—comes from the influence of God's Spirit upon the mind.—‘The fruits of the Spirit are in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth.’ This is the burden of Scripture, and it is interwoven with every part of the services of the Church. ‘If then,’ (says Bishop White on the ordination offices,) ‘if then, agreeably to the expressions which follow in the question of serving God, for the promoting of His glory, and the edifying of his people, a man be desirous of taking on him the ministerial office, under a sufficient knowledge of the purposes for which it was instituted, accompanied by a due regard for them; and if he be desirous of devoting his time, his talents, and his labours, to so holy and benevolent a use; surely, it is not less to be ascribed to the Holy Spirit, than any good work which he may perform.’ ”

This expresses the view of the Church as to the meaning of the expression, “*being inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost.*” The Methodist doctrine of an “inward call,” she utterly repudiates as contrary to the Scriptures, and subversive of the Christian ministry.

I have thus shown you, my friend, the utterly *unscriptural* character of the “Methodist Church.” It was rather incongruous to undertake to show this, after I had proved it to be no Church at all, having neither a *lawful* ministry, nor *lawful* sacraments. You desired the information, however, and I have endeavoured to give it to you.



