



# WESLEYAN METHODISM

IN UPPER CANADA:

## A SERMON,

PREACHED BEFORE THE CONFERENCE

OF

MINISTERS OF THE WESLEYAN-METHODIST CHURCH

IN CANADA,

CITY OF TORONTO, JUNE 18th, 1837:

BY EGERTON RYERSON.

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PUBLISHED BY REQUEST OF THE CONFERENCE.

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"To testify the Gospel of the grace of God."—*St. Paul.*

"The friends of all, the enemies of none."—*John Wesley.*

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## ADVERTISEMENT.

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THE following Discourse would not have been delivered or published but for the following circumstances:—At an early period of the Session of the Wesleyan Conference, lately held in the City of Toronto, a Resolution was adopted—

“ That Brother Egerton Ryerson be requested to deliver a Discourse, on Sunday Evening next, on the Rise, Progress, Present State, and Future Prospects of Methodism in Upper Canada.”

This Resolution was introduced by a friend of the Author who had heard him preach on the object and character of Wesleyan Methodism in Upper Canada about two years since, and who thought that a discourse on that subject, during the sittings of the Conference, under the present circumstances of the Connexion, was highly desirable. The following Discourse is the result of the Author's compliance with the request of his ministerial brethren. Two or three days after its delivery, a communication was presented to the Author, signed by the heads and a number of the members of the Wesleyan Congregation of Toronto, congratulating him on his safe return to his native land, and requesting the publication of his “*Portraiture of Methodism*,” “in such numbers that it might find its way into every house in Upper Canada,”—assigning, as the reason, their conviction that “its perusal would exercise a powerful influence in dispelling the mists of error and prejudice, and proving

incontrovertibly the commanding and important position which Methodism at the present day occupies in the Church of Christ." During the same week the Conference made a similar request. The Author's refusal, under such circumstances, to publish the substance of what he had delivered, would have argued a supercilious obstinacy, as his appearance before the public under other circumstances would have indicated temerity and presumption.

The Discourse itself contains sufficient evidence of the author's predilection for that form of Christianity which he has undertaken to delineate; but the frequent references he has made to distinguished Lights of other branches of the Universal Church of Christ—as authorities for the sentiments he has advanced—will show that Methodism is not viewed as an *exclusive* system, but as an important instrument, in the great apparatus of Divine agency, to promulgate those truths and promote those objects which embrace the faith and hopes of all "who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity," of every section of Protestant Christendom. Jay has truly and beautifully observed—"We may in a degree value ourselves as being members of a particular church, but we shall be saved only as members of the Church Universal; and, if we are in a right spirit, we shall prize the name of Christian a thousand times more than any other name, however extensive or esteemed the religious body from which it is derived."

"A cordial agreement in the *essentials* of the Gospel *should* induce us to put up with minor differences; and a superior and constant engagement of the soul to the most important objects of religion *will* draw off,

*comparatively*, the attention from inferior ones, leaving us neither leisure nor relish for them.

“ When, therefore, in reference to the Latter-day Glory, it is said, ‘ They shall see eye to eye,’ we are persuaded, with Baxter, that there may not be a much more complete *uniformity* of opinion in many things than there now is. But there will be a more perfect accordance *in* great things, and a more perfect agreement *concerning* lesser ones. They will see eye to eye as to the propriety of one measure;—that, if we cannot be of one *mind*, we should, like the first converts at Jerusalem, be ‘ of one heart and one soul,’—‘ a oneness unaffected by minuter distinctions; a oneness which included, as servants of the same Lord and as guests at the same table, a Hopkins and a Bates, a Watts and a Newton, a Porteous and a Hall, [a Wesley and an Edwards;] a oneness that resembles the identity of human nature, notwithstanding all the varieties of man.

“ When will some persons believe or remember, That, where there are no *parts*, there can be no *union*?—That, where there is no *variety*, there can be no *harmony*?—That it does not follow, because one thing is right, another thing is absolutely wrong?—That others differ no further from us than we differ from others?—That it is meanness and injustice to assume a freedom we refuse to yield?—That children, differing in age, and size, and dress, and schooling, and designation, belong to the same family?—And that the grain, growing in various fields and distances, is wheat still sown by the same hand, and to be gathered into the same garner?”\*

\* Jay’s Dedication of his “ Evening Exercises for the Closet,” ad-

“Perhaps,” says Robert Hall, “there never was so much unanimity witnessed among the professors of serious piety as at the present. Systems of religion fundamentally erroneous are falling into decay, while the subordinate points of difference, which do not affect the principal verities of Christianity, nor the ground of hope, are either consigned to oblivion, or are the subjects of temperate and amicable controversy; and, in consequence of their subsiding to their just level, the former appear in their great and natural magnitude.”\*

Such are the sentiments and feelings which the author of the following Discourse desires to see general in this Province. How delightful to see a narrow-hearted bigotry for external forms, and an eager grasp for civil preferences, absorbed by the genial influence of Christian charity, and disappear before the grandeur of “the common salvation” and the grace of “one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in us all!” Bunyan, in his *Holy War*, says, that Mr. Prejudice fell down and broke his leg. “I wish,” adds the matchless Allegorist, “he had broken his neck.” Believing that the Reader will cordially join the Author in the foregoing sentiments, and in the devout wish of the immortal Bunyan, he solicits for the following pages an indulgent perusal, and the requisite allowances for a perpetual effort at condensation, and the restraints of great and prescribed brevity.

dressed to *William Wilberforce, Esquire*. Mr. Jay is a distinguished Minister of an Independent Congregation in Bath, England: Wilberforce, the Friend of the Slave, and the Benefactor of Mankind, was a member of the Church of England.

\* Works

*N. B.*—Besides the Writers quoted, the Author is indebted for several thoughts and illustrations in the following Discourse to two very valuable works—“*A View of the Christian Ministry,*” by the Rev. *C. Bridges*, a Clergyman of the Church of England, and author of an excellent Commentary on the 119th Psalm, as illustrating *Christian Experience*;—and “*The Great Teacher; or Characteristics of our Lord’s Ministry,*” by the Rev. *John Harris*, an Independent Minister, and author of “*Mammon; or Covetousness the Sin of the Christian Church,*”—a prize essay, twenty thousand copies of which have been sold in England during the last few months, at six shillings sterling per copy.

KINGSTON, U. C., July 21st, 1837.





## S E R M O N .

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“GO YE INTO ALL THE WORLD, AND PREACH THE GOSPEL TO EVERY CREATURE.”

Mark xvi. 15.

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*My honoured Fathers and Brethren in the Ministry,  
and Christian Friends :*

DURING a protracted absence of more than eighteen months, my thoughts and affections have spontaneously flowed back to this my native land, and to my beloved friends and companions in the work and tribulation of our Lord Jesus Christ. In imagination, in prayer, and sympathy, I have been present with you in your counsels, —have shared largely in your trials, and rejoiced in your success. From time to time the question has been, with ever accumulating interest and force, pressed home to my heart,—“What can be done most effectually to advance the religious and social happiness and welfare of the inhabitants of Upper Canada?” I have often revolved in my mind, (as I have heard them confidently and with apparent earnestness avowed,) the theories of those political economists, who maintain that the essential well-being of man consists in health of body, sufficiency of food, and personal liberty,—and who propose to remedy the existing ills of society, and bring about the universal reign of millennial happiness, by altered forms of government, improved balances of power, other distributions of property, new constitutions and laws of the latest invention, from the exhaustless manufactory of human ingenuity and speculation. I have also endeavoured to examine the dogmas of those professed philosophers, who, independent of any Divine agency, and leaving Christianity altogether out of the question, are about to create all things new by the magic power of science and education. In both of these plausible, and too widely-spread theories, there appears to me to be this radical defect, and irrational as well as anti-scriptural omission: Man, as a *moral* being, is entirely overlooked. If he were a mere *animal*, then

there might be some show of reason for saying, that health of body, a full stomach, and unrestricted liberty, are the essentials of human happiness. If man be considered merely as an *intellectual*, as well as a physical being, the educational culture of the mind might be deemed sufficient to raise him to the highest point of his destined elevation. But when it is remembered, that He who gave to man his animal functions and endowed him with intellectual faculties, has also implanted within him *moral* feelings,—has placed in his bosom the supreme faculty of *conscience*,—has stamped upon him a *moral* character, and invested him with a *moral* agency and responsibility ; and that it is man's *moral* feelings which are depraved, and his *moral* condition and character which are debased, and his *moral* guilt and alienation, which fills the world he inhabits with lamentation and woe,—then, what other than a *moral* remedy is adapted to his case? and where is that *moral* remedy to be found but in the Gospel of Jesus Christ? “This is the record, that *God* hath given unto us, eternal life ; and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life.”\*

How essential the difference between the remedy appointed by God, and that devised by man, for the removal of human misery and the promotion of human happiness! It is the difference of wisdom and folly, of power and weakness, of heaven and earth, of life and death!

We are therefore brought back to the “Gospel of the grace of God,” as the only means of regeneration and happiness to the world of mankind. If, then, we would convert every moral waste in Upper Canada into a fruitful field, and make the inhabitants a people whose God is the Lord ; if we would replace every tomahawk and scalping-knife with the word of Life, and stamp the image of Divine love and purity upon every idolatrous and savage heart, we must consecrate our lives and our all, to the service and work of Him, who, when on the verge of glory, at the commencing moment of his ascension to the Throne of Majesty on high, turned to his disciples with features and emotions of ineffable tenderness, and delivered this memorable command,—“Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.” And do we not hear the same voice issuing forth from the Throne of his heavenly grace, addressing, in loftiest accents of authority, and in sweetest tones of love, his servants present, “Go

\* 1 John v. 11, 12.

ye into every township, and neighbourhood, and cottage, in this Province, and preach the Gospel to every inhabitant ; nay, go to the very shores of the Pacific and Arctic Oceans, and tell every red man of the forest, that I have died for him.”

I propose to consider the adaptation of *Wesleyan Methodism in Upper Canada* to accomplish, as far as in us lies, this valedictory command of our Divine Redeemer. For this purpose let us take a summary view of the *End* which Methodism proposes—the *Discipline* it enjoins—the *Ministry* it employs—the *Doctrines* it inculcates—and the *Success* it enjoys.

I. *The End which Methodism proposes.*—This is as simple as it is sublime and glorious. It is to save sinners, to make men Christians,—Christians in heart and life, in temper, word and work,—Christians, such as the Bible describes, such as love God with all their hearts, and their fellow-creatures of mankind as themselves. We can aim at no higher, and we acknowledge no meaner end than this. We exist not for the sake of a form of church government, or for the interests of a mere sect or party : nay, party spirit melts away in that atmosphere of love which we wish to see encompassing the globe. Let others, if they choose, contend about the pins and curtains of the tabernacle ; be it our business to press our way into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus, to the mercy seat of God, and carry as many with us as we can. Be it our business, as builders in the Church of God, to erect a spiritual and heavenly temple—an habitation of God through the Spirit—upon the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the Chief corner-stone ; a temple with pillars to embrace the world, with walls as invincible as omnipotence ; a temple visible to the eye of faith, and real to the heart of love, in which the kindled incense of prayer, and intercession, and praise, shall ceaselessly ascend as a sweet savour to the King eternal, immortal and invisible ; a temple illumined by the glory of the Lamb in the midst of the Throne of God, and in which is breathed the air of Paradise itself. Could we accomplish the object we have in view, to the utmost of our wishes, every human heart would become the residence of the Holy Spirit, and the name of Jesus would be written upon every forehead ; our halls of legislation would become places of sweet counsel ; our halls of learning, and schools of education, would be blest and beautified with the wisdom that is from above ; the forms and creations of art would be dedicated to the

praise of God, and He alone would become the centre and focus of all the sciences and every branch of knowledge; love would form the sacred and inviolable bond of nations; and in all the earth, which would then be God's holy mountain, there would be nothing to hurt or to destroy.

That the proposal and pursuit of an end so benevolent and god-like is greatly needful,—nay, is absolutely necessary,—the divinely declared character of man's degenerate nature, and the moral state of society in this Province, furnish ample and melancholy proof. We, like the generations of the ancients, 'have been conceived in sin and brought forth in iniquity;' 'the hearts of the sons of men,' in our age and Province, as well as in the days and country of the Prophets and Apostles, 'are fully set in them to do evil.' And though this Province has been raised to a degree of religious and moral elevation, unequalled, I believe, in any other Colony of the British Empire, yet, what are its prominent moral features? Look through society in Toronto, in Kingston, in Niagara, in Hamilton, in any village or township in the Province, and how many comparatively will you find whose spirit and lives resemble the portrait of the Christian character as drawn by the pencil of Inspiration? Here and there will you meet with a witness for Christ,—here and there a torch has been lighted from the altar of God which gleams through the surrounding darkness; but throughout the length and breadth of the land, does not the heart-rending truth resound over every plain, and reverberate through every valley, and echo from every hill, and peal through every street, that not only the majority, but the multitude of our fellow-inhabitants and townsmen are dead while they live,—are indeed redeemed by the blood of Jesus to life eternal, and yet dead in trespasses and sins,—are ransomed from their captivity, and yet led captive by the devil at his will,—are reconciled to God through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, and yet alienated from the life of God by wicked works? To raise these dead—to rescue these captives—to announce the ministry of reconciliation to these aliens and rebels—to impart to every inhabitant of this rapidly populating Province, that knowledge of the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent, which is life eternal, is the great work on which *Methodism* is intent; a work, in which the loftiest seraphs before the Throne of God would rejoice to be employed; a work, for which the everlasting Father gave his only begotten Son; a work, for which the eternal Son became incarnate, suffered, died, and ascended into

heaven, as a perpetual Priest and Advocate ; a work, for which the Holy Ghost, proceeding from the Father and the Son, moves upon the moral chaos of society, to reduce confusion to order, to animate the dead with life, and to adorn the face of the land with the verdure of truth, and peace, and joy.

Such is the simplicity, the comprehensiveness, the magnitude, and the sublimity of the *end* which *Methodism* proposes ; and upon this it founds its first claim to our respect, our love, our support, and our labours.

II. The second feature of Methodism to which we invite attention in this hasty review, is the *Discipline which it enjoins*. In order to appreciate the character and importance of this part of our system, it is necessary to take into account the three grand Scripture principles on which it is founded.

1. That the great design of the Son of God in establishing his Church or kingdom on earth was, to stamp upon the world a new moral character—to renovate and restore its moral health—to extirpate its vices, and to convert it into one great spiritual community, of which He himself is the exemplar, the life, the centre, and the glory.

2. That, in order to attain this end, the members of his Church must possess a character essentially different from the rest of the world. “Every branch,” said Christ,—and he spoke prospectively as well as in reference to existing evils,—“Every branch which my Father hath not planted shall be rooted up.” It has been well observed, that the Church is a sacred enclosure, brought into cultivation by the Divine Husbandman, and intended to be filled exclusively with the plants of righteousness. On the outside of this enclosure is to be found the spontaneous produce of evil, bringing forth fruit unto death ; but all within are meant to be the “plants of the Lord’s right hand planting,” exhibiting in the fruits they bear the essential difference between sin and holiness, and the infinite superiority of his transforming grace over the deadly produce of depraved nature.

3. That, to prevent the world from getting into the Church, corrupting, absorbing, and destroying it,—to maintain its spiritual character, and healthful energy, and diffusive efficiency, its Divine Founder prescribed a change of character as the indispensable condition of membership, and invested the Church with power to expel offenders. He inscribed over its “entrance gate” the memorable

words, "Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God;" and commanded his Apostles to admit by the door of visible baptism, those who furnished the evidence of "repentance towards God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." In reference to the excision of diseased members, our Lord has furnished the following simple but complete code of ecclesiastical discipline: "Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go tell him his fault between him and thee alone; if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the Church; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican."\* St. Paul's first Epistle to the Corinthians contains sundry admonitions on this subject.

Now, it is upon these great principles of the Christian dispensation that the disciplinary rules of Methodism are founded. The Methodist Church is not a worldly society, but (to use the words of our Rules) it "is no other than 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."† The condition of membership is, 'a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from sin,'—manifested, first, "by doing no harm, by avoiding evil of every kind;" secondly, "by doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, and, as far as possible, to all men;" thirdly, "by attending all the ordinances of God."‡ Our Rules enter into scriptural details on each of these points. To maintain the distinctive religious and spiritual character of our community, ample provision is made in our Discipline, according to the principles of the New Testament, for the expulsion of disorderly members and ministers. To promote the great end for which we exist as a body,—the salvation of men, through the belief of the truth and sanctification of the Spirit,—we have the ministry of the Word—the Sacraments—Love-Feasts, or Feasts of Charity||—

\* Matthew xviii. 15-18.

† "The visible Church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure Word of God is preached, and the Sacraments are duly administered according to Christ's ordinance in all those things that of necessity are requisite to the same."—*Nineteenth Article of the Church of England*.

‡ *Methodist Doctrines and Rules*, pp. 71-74.

|| Jude 12.

meetings for prayer, religious intercourse and fellowship, together with various subordinate agencies, in connexion with the regular ministrations of the sanctuary; the whole forming a community, in the judgment of that great Divine and Philosopher, Archdeacon Paley, very analogous to that of the primitive Christians. In perhaps the best work on the *Evidences of Christianity*, which any age has produced, Dr. Paley observes, that "after men became Christians, much of their time was spent in prayer, devotion, in religious meetings, in celebrating the Eucharist, in conferences, in exhortations, in preaching, in affectionate intercourse with one another, and in corresponding with other Societies. Perhaps their mode of life, in its form and habit, was not very unlike the *Unitas Fratrum*, or *Modern Methodists*."

The ecclesiastical discipline of Methodism, is characterized by three things,—simplicity, unity, efficiency: *Simplicity*, in the natural order of all its arrangements; *unity*, in the harmonious application and movement of all its parts; *efficiency*, in the active and advantageous employment of all its gifts, talents and resources, in the sublime work of the world's regeneration.

III. Our third view of Wesleyan Methodism, in connexion with the religious improvement of this Province, relates to the *Ministry which it employs*.

1. A standing Ministry, separated from worldly avocations and pursuits, for the edification of the Church and the conversion of the world, is held by Methodism to be of *Divine appointment*.

It has been justly remarked, that "the Great Head of the Church has ordained three grand repositories of his truth: *In the Scriptures* he has preserved it by his Providence against hostile attacks. *In the hearts of Christians* he has maintained it by the almighty agency of his Spirit, even under every outward token of general apostacy. *In the Christian Ministry* he has deposited 'this treasure in earthen vessels' for the edification and enriching of the Church in successive ages."

By incidental notices of Enoch and Noah, the institution of public teaching is connected with the antediluvian era of the world; in the Patriarchal ages it was probably vested in the heads of families, as we gather from certain passages in the 14th and 19th chapters of



the Book of Genesis; in the Jewish economy Moses received his commission immediately from God, and was subsequently assisted by seventy Elders associated with him.\* Joshua, like his predecessor Moses, frequently assembled the people of Israel and delivered to them the messages of God. At subsequent periods of the Jewish history, we read of the schools of the prophets as the repository of the public teaching of the land.† After the captivity, the ordinance seems to have been restored nearly in its present usual form, with an established course of scriptural exposition and interpretation. Our Lord, the Great Teacher of righteousness, was anointed to this holy work; constantly employed himself in it; ordained others to it; sealed their commission with the gift of his own Spirit, enjoining upon them as he entered the ascending cloud of angelic glory, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature."

The Divine institution, as well as the necessity, the relation, and end of the Christian Ministry, may be collected from various scriptural allusions to the Church of God in both the Old and New Testaments. If the Church be called a *flock*, the *Minister* is the *pastor*, to seek that which is lost, to strengthen the weak, to heal the sick, to bring back again that which was driven away; in a word, to *shepherd* the flock in all the exercises of tenderness, consideration and care, which belong to that endearing character. If the family of Christ be an *household*, the *Minister*, is the 'faithful and wise steward,' who dispenses the provisions of the house according to the necessities of its several members. If the Church of God be a *city*, he is the *watchman* to awaken and warn slumberers of their peril. If it be an *husbandry*, he is the '*labourer*' to plant and water the soil, to cleanse the earth, to watch the growth of the plant, and instrumentally to bring forward the harvest. If it be a *building*, he is the 'master builder,' to build upon the sure foundation lively stones, a spiritual house 'growing into an holy temple of the Lord, builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit.' If a treaty of peace is to be negotiated between the Majesty of Heaven and a world of rebels, he is the *ambassador*, entrusted with the 'ministry of reconciliation,' and praying them in Christ's stead, 'Be ye reconciled to God.'

Whether Jehovah might not have accomplished the great work of laying the foundation and rearing the superstructure of the Chris-

\* Exodus xxiv.; Numbers xi.

† 1 Samuel x. 5, 6.

tian Church by any other than the human agency which he has seen fit to employ, is at best a superfluous inquiry. With God all things are possible. He might have instructed as well as awakened St. Paul by a miracle, but he chose to employ Ananias for that purpose. The angel might have instructed Cornelius and his household, as well as directed him to send to Joppa for the Apostle Peter; but the latter was the divinely-appointed medium of communicating evangelical light to the minds of these first fruits of the Gentiles. In sacred history the ordinance of the holy Ministry is connected with the national welfare, as well as the extension of scriptural religion. The destitution of a "teaching priest" in Asa's reign was marked by a time of public distress and "vexation." In the subsequent reign of Jehoshaphat, the mission of faithful Levites and Priests throughout all the cities was followed by great national prosperity. The comparative disuse of preaching as a means of public Scriptural instruction was a concomitant of the dark ages, whilst its revival was coeval with the era of the Reformation. *Mosheim*, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, remarks, that "the best system of religion must necessarily either dwindle to nothing, or be egregiously corrupted, if it is not perpetually inculcated and explained by a regular and standing Ministry."\* "Not even," (says the great Reformer Calvin, with an energy peculiar to himself,) "Not even is the light and heat of the sun,—not even is meat and drink so needful for the support and cherishing of our present life, as the Pastoral office for the preservation of the Church on earth."† The Ministry of the world is, therefore, the divinely-ordained means of edifying the Church and converting the world; and that ordinance must remain, according to the established economy of human redemption, as long as there is a single sinner to be brought into the family of God, or a single grace in the heart of the believer to advance to perfection.

2. The *call* to the Ministry is held by Methodism to be of *Divine influence and inspiration*, as well as its institution of Divine appointment. The scriptural call to the Ministry, as viewed by Methodism, is *internal* and *external*. The *internal* call is the voice and power of the Holy Ghost directing the will and the judgment to the great work of saving souls; it is a *constraining desire*, far above the general desire, which is given to every true Christian, to promote the glory of God;‡ it is not a *transient*, but a *perpetual* and special kindling

\* Cent. I. part 2, chap. ii. † Institutes, lib. IV., c. iii. 3.

‡ "Yet every Christian is not ordained to be a Minister. The examples of

within which overcomes all difficulties, and quickens to a readiness of mind in the ministrations of the word, that would savour of presumption, were it not restrained by the attendant sense of unfitness and unworthiness. The sense of weakness and defilement humbles the spirit, and almost shuts the mouth; but the sense of mercy constrains the heart and unseals the lips. Neither disgrace, nor poverty, nor persecution, will prevent him who is called by the Spirit, and to whom is committed the word of reconciliation, from preaching the unsearchable riches of Christ; nor will he count his life dear unto him that he may proclaim a living Redeemer to a dying world. It is the purpose of his heart, (as Quesnel expresses it,) "*to live, to labour, and possess nothing, but for Jesus Christ and his Church.*" He is like the prophet Jeremiah, who said, "I will not make mention of him nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire, shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and could not stay."\*

This *inward call*, which has been so frequently ridiculed as a conceit of Methodism, is not only recognized by the *Church of England*, but is the presumptive ground on which she delegates the sacred functions of the Christian Ministry. Nothing can be more explicit than the solemn question which she puts to every man who is ordained in her communion: "*Do you trust that you are inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon you this office and ministry?*" The reply is—"I trust so." "Certainly (says Bishop Burnet) this answer ought to be well considered; for if any one says, '*I trust so,*' that yet knows nothing of any such motion, and can give no account of it, he lies to the Holy Ghost, and makes his way to the altar with a lie in his mouth, and that not to man, but to God."†

The *external call* to the Christian Ministry is the recognition and setting apart by the Church as a Minister, him whom God had inwardly called by his Spirit to that work. No man is to be the sovereign and independent judge of the purpose of God respecting

Aquila and Priscilla (Acts xviii.), and the various helpers of the primitive Church called over by name in the apostolical salutations, (such as Rom. xvi. &c.) clearly prove, that devotedness to the cause of God is a component and acceptable part of Christian obligation in the ordinary walks of life. In this wide field of service the Christian laity may exhibit the spirit of the Ministry in perfect consistency with the duties of their respective callings, and without an unauthorised intrusion upon the express commission of the sacred office.—*Bridges on the Christian Ministry*, chap. VI.

\* Jer. xx. 9.

† Pastoral Care, chap. VI.

him in this matter. If God calls *inwardly* by his *Spirit*, that call will, in his own good time, be responded to *externally* on the part of his Church. Both calls, though essentially distinct in their character, are equally Divine in the economy of God's grace and providence: both unite in the government of Him who "is not the author of confusion, but of peace, as in all the Churches of the saints;" and whose unction of rational, holy, and orderly character, delightfully harmonizes with the constituted appointments of his will. It is in this *combined* manifestation of Divine and human authority that, as Christian and Methodist Ministers, we are enabled to "serve God with our spirit in the Gospel of his Son;" that we have the confidence that he will stand by us and own our work; and that we have abounding cause to "thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled us, for that he counted us faithful, putting us into the ministry."

3. The *qualifications* for the work of the Christian Ministry, no less than a call to its sacred functions, is held by Methodism to be the *result of Divine influence and illumination*. Into a discussion of the character, the attainments, and gifts which may be fairly considered as essential to the sacred office, it is not my purpose to enter. I only state what Methodism assumes to be an incontrovertible Biblical axiom,—and I state it in the strong language of that pious and eminent Divine of the Church of England, *John Newton*, that "None but He who made the world, can make a Minister of the Gospel." That distinguished Minister proceeds to illustrate this position as follows; for proof it needs none:—"If a young man has capacity, culture and application may make him a scholar, a philosopher, or an orator; but a true Minister must have certain principles, motives, feelings and aims, which no industry or endeavours of men can either acquire or communicate. They must be given from above, or they cannot be received."\* But let it not be inferred from this statement, as has often been erroneously represented, that we under-rate or neglect human aids and acquirements in the work of the Ministry. The very examinations through which young men are required to pass before they are admitted into the Methodist Ministry, prove the reverse. Our Rules prescribe not merely the regular, daily, and prayerful study of the Holy Scriptures, with the requisite aids, but the employment of five hours out of twenty-four in the careful reading and study of the best authors. The 12th, 14th, and 16th sections of our *Doctrines and Rules* furnish

\* Works, Vol. V., p. 62.

ample evidence of our deep conviction, how much the establishment and edification of the Church may be materially hindered by the Minister's contracted statement, crude interpretation, or misdirected Scripture application; that the furniture of his mind should possess a store of knowledge far beyond a bare sufficiency for his own personal salvation; that "the priest's lips should keep knowledge;" that he should be the "householder, instructed into the kingdom of heaven, who bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old;" that he should have an enlarged acquaintance with his own principles and doctrines, in order to exhibit them in their true light and apply them to daily occurring emergencies; that the responsibility of each Minister to store his mind with subjects of general interest, proportionably increases with the wide diffusion of knowledge. But after all, and independent of all that human talents and industry can accomplish, and allowing their full weight in the scale of advantage, we insist (in the authoritative language of Bishop Sanderson), that "you may rise up early and go to bed late, and study hard, and read much, and devour the marrow of the best authors; and when you have done all, unless God give a blessing to your endeavours, be as lean and meagre in regard to true and useful learning, as Pharaoh's lean kine were, after they had devoured the fat ones. It is God that both ministereth the seed to the sower, and multiplieth the seed sown: the principal and the increase are both his."\* After the most profound researches into the history of the Christian Church, Milner observes, that a "Minister should be a man of prayer; he needs the internal instruction of the primary Teacher."†

4. The *success* of the Christian Ministry is viewed by Methodism as entirely the effect of the *influence, and power, and blessing of the Holy Ghost*. The *objects and end* of our Ministry sufficiently evince the reality and practical importance of this view. The *objects* of our Ministry are human beings and moral agents whose "understandings are darkened," whose hearts are "enmity against God," whose souls are "dead in trespasses and sins," who are "lying in the wicked one." The *end* of our Ministry is, to dispel that darkness, to slay that enmity, to give life to that deadness, to translate from the kingdom of Satan into the kingdom of God's dear Son. What can the mere agency of man or the powers of an arch-angel do towards accomplishing such a work? "We may as well attempt (says an old Puritan Divine) to batter down strong walls with the breath of

\* Sermons.

† Church History, Vol. IV., p. 134.

our mouths, as to do good upon men's souls without the Spirit of God." Until the Spirit be poured out upon us from on high, the wilderness, notwithstanding the most diligent cultivation, must remain a wilderness still. For want of the influence of the Holy Spirit, how comparatively successful was the public ministry of the Son of God himself. Notwithstanding the perfection of his character, the divinity of his doctrine, the godlike manner of his teaching, and the miraculous testimonials to his mission, he did not succeed in making as many converts during the whole three years of his ministry, as did his poor fisherman disciple Peter in a single sermon, after the effusion of the Holy Spirit. "I once thought in the foolishness of my heart, (says the late pious Cecil,) 'What sort of a sermon must that have been, which was preached by St. Peter, when three thousand souls were converted at once?' What sort of a sermon! Such as other sermons. There is nothing to be found in it extraordinary. The effect was not produced by his eloquence, but by the mighty power of God present with his word. It is in vain to attend one minister after another, and to have sermon after sermon, unless we pray that the Holy Spirit may accompany his word."\* When the Son of God ascended up on high, leading captivity captive, giving gifts to men, he gave all gifts in one—the *Holy Spirit*,—the enlightening, converting, sanctifying, saving *Spirit*. When the Holy Spirit broods over the darkness of the human mind, it flames with light; when He levies human hearts in the name of Christ, the bitterest persecutors of the Church become her champions and her martyrs; when He breathes upon the slain in the valley of dry bones, the very dead start into life; when He descends like a vital flood upon the barren earth, the desert blooms with the fertility and beauty of paradise; when He comes forth to plead the cause of God and of truth against idolatry and error and vice, multitudes receive the truth in the love of it,—vast territories are added to the domains of the Church. "*Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord.*"

5. Our last remark on this part of the subject is, that the Ministry employed by Methodism is *itinerant in its labours*. By this regulation, the strongest possible check is given to the growth of worldly affections and local partialities in the Ministry; its operations are expanded like the light of heaven; variety of talent is brought to bear upon each congregation; the most useful gifts are diffused over

\* Cecil's Remains.

the Church and the world to the widest possible extent; and, last but not least, the Gospel is hereby preached to tens of thousands of the poor. Douglas, in his admirable book on the "*Advancement of Society in Knowledge and Religion*," forcibly illustrates the power of the grand institution of an Itinerant Ministry. "Of all the methods (he observes) for diffusing religion, preaching is the most efficient. It is to preaching that Christianity owes its origin, its continuance, and its progress; and it is to *itinerant* preaching (however the ignorant may undervalue it) that we owe the conversion of the Roman world from Paganism to primitive Christianity,—our own freedom from the thralldom of Popery, in the success of the Reformation,—and the revival of Christianity at the present day from the depression which it had undergone, owing to the prevalency of infidelity and indifference."

Such, my friends, is the Methodist Ministry,—thus very briefly and superficially reviewed,—which is the third ground on which Methodism rests its claim to the character of a scriptural and well-adapted agency, under the Divine blessing, for the religious and social improvement of this country.

IV. Our fourth, and still more important view of Methodism, regards the *Doctrines which it inculcates*. There is a plausible, but false and dangerous, *religious liberalism* abroad, which professes indifference in respect to *doctrines*,—which teaches that all creeds are equally good, that doctrines are nothing, but practice is every thing. Let us for one moment test the truth and reasonableness of this quintessence of scepticism and infidelity by the touch-stone of science and the affairs of every-day life. By *doctrines* I understand matters of faith—*first principles*—or *theory*, if you please. Now suppose I were to assert that *doctrines* in respect to civil government are nothing; that whether the power of the monarch is absolute or limited—whether the authority of the executive is responsible or irresponsible—whether the subject has guaranteed rights and privileges or not, are mere doctrines or first principles of government, and therefore of no importance: or in reading a lecture of caution to the mathematician against exclusiveness, or pertinacious attachment to theory, suppose I were gravely to assure him that the axioms on which he rests every step of his demonstrations, are only first principles, and therefore a matter of indifference; or the professor of physical science, that theory or first principles in the various branches of natural philosophy are nothing, that practice is every

thing—who would subscribe to my liberalism in government, in mathematics, in physical science? In each case would not the statesman, the mathematician, or the philosopher, rationally and indignantly ask in reply, whether a sound constitution is of no importance to a healthful body, a firm foundation to a safe edifice, or upright principles to a virtuous man? What is practice without principle, but a stream without a spring, a tree without a root? On what is Paganism itself founded, but error in *doctrines* or first principles? How can we offer rational and acceptable worship to Jehovah, without a belief in the *doctrines* which relate to his Divine perfections, his eternity, his power, his wisdom, his knowledge, his holiness, his truth, his goodness? How is it possible to approach the Divine Being through a Mediator, (the only revealed way of man's approach to his Maker,) without a belief in the doctrine of the Trinity, of the fall and depravity of man, of the atonement made by Christ, of justification by faith, of the work of the Holy Spirit? Doctrines are therefore the very foundation and frame-work of Christianity. "All Scripture (says St. Peter) is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable (first of all) for *doctrine*, (and then) for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

The doctrines just enumerated are the leading doctrines of Methodism; but that which holds the pre-eminence,—which, like the sun, diffuses light and vitality through all the ministrations of Methodism, is the doctrine of salvation through a crucified Redeemer,—“Christ crucified”—as God's grand ordinance in saving sinners, as the centre of the widely-extended circle of scriptural truth,—embracing all that is honourable to God and profitable to man,—all the delightful ways of the Divine faithfulness and love,—and all that concerns our character, our professions, our privileges, our obligations, and our hopes and prospects for eternity. “We have been, (says a late pious Prelate of the Church of England,) we have been long endeavouring to reform the nation by moral preaching: with what effect? None. We must change our voice; we must preach ‘Christ and him crucified.’ Nothing but the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation.”\* One short sentence describes the whole doctrinal, practical, and experimental system of Methodism—“Christ is all and in all.”

To be a little more particular, both as to the Methodistic view

\* Bishop Lavington's Charges.



of the Gospel scheme, and the order in which its blessings are promised and bestowed upon man.

1. Man is viewed as “very far gone from original righteousness, and of his own nature inclined to evil, and that continually,—as blind, ignorant, wandering out of the way with his mind wholly estranged from God—unable to “turn and prepare himself, by his own natural strength and works, to faith and calling upon God”—having “no power to do good works, pleasant and acceptable to God, without the grace of God preventing him that he may have a good will, and working with him when he has that good will.”\*

2. The Gospel is viewed as a dispensation of unmerited favour,—of boundless mercy,—of infinite love to *every human being*,—holding forth a free pardon and full salvation to all who repent and believe in Jesus Christ; not for any works or deserving on the part of man, but “only for the merit of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.”†

3. The Gospel, viewed as a means to attain an end, is considered as exhibiting as complete fitness as can possibly be discovered in the structure and laws of the natural world; from a view of which we derive our arguments in proof of the existence of the Divine Being. Its offered and promised blessings are in every respect suited to the state and necessities of man; wisdom to instruct him, mercy to pardon, grace to sanctify, power to strengthen him,—enlightening his understanding, awakening his conscience, subduing his will, renewing his heart, regulating his passions, expanding his prospects and hopes to a “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.”

4. The Gospel, considered as a general plan of salvation, is viewed as a glorious display of the Divine perfections, in which all the attributes of God shine forth with cloudless splendour: Divine *wisdom* conspicuous in the wonderful plan of redemption; Divine *love* in the gift of the Redeemer; Divine *justice*, tempered with *mercy* to man, in the death of the Saviour; Divine *power* in making the whole effectual to raise a fallen creature from a state of sin and misery to a state of purity and happiness, and from a state of death to immortal life and glory.

As to the *order* in which the blessings of the Gospel are promised;

\* Methodist Doctrines and Rules.

† Ibid.

and in which we are taught to pray for and expect them, this is a point of great importance, and respecting which there is much confusion in different systems of religion. In the study of any art or science, a man must begin with the fundamental principles, before he can proceed to the higher branches of it. In the science of man's salvation, Methodism begins with—

1. *Repentance*; from a belief that a man must be convinced of his faults, before he can be reclaimed from them,—that he must be conscious of his condemnation, before he will seek for pardon,—that he must feel his need of a Saviour, in order to be prepared to appreciate and rely upon Jesus as *his* Saviour. In this order, we think we are following the example of our Lord and his Apostles; the former of whom commenced his public ministry with saying, “*Repent*, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand;” and the latter “testified both to Jews and Greeks [first] *repentance* toward God, and [secondly] *faith* toward our Lord Jesus Christ.”

2. The second important step in the order of Gospel blessings is, *Faith* in the Lord Jesus Christ,—arising chiefly from a scriptural view of his priestly office, as the complete atonement and accepted sacrifice for our sins. In this believing trust in Christ as his Saviour, the repentant sinner obtains “redemption in his blood, even the forgiveness of sins,” and is made a partaker of the Divine nature: which leads me to remark that,

3. *Justification*, or pardon, adoption and regeneration, are the third in the order of blessings which we receive through the atonement of the Redeemer. These blessings are different in their nature, but are the same in the order of time, and are therefore classed together. By justification, or pardon, or forgiveness, (which terms in the New Testament usually signify the same thing,) a sinner is exonerated from punishment and received into the Divine favour; by adoption and regeneration, he is taken into the family of God, and made a partaker of a filial and renewed Spirit: these blessings being usually, if not invariably, accompanied with an inward testimony or assurance of the Holy Spirit,—the “Spirit of God bearing testimony with his spirit that he is a child of God;” and “because he is a child, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into his heart; crying, *Abba, Father.*”\*

\* Rom. viii, 16. Gal. iv. 6.

4. In this state of pardon and adoption, *faith* becomes a practical and operative principle of sufficient power, not only to restrain the passions and regulate the general deportment, but to influence every faculty of the soul and every action of the life, and to transform the whole man, as a moral agent, into the image of God. The circulating vitality of the Saviour's love is diffused through his whole moral nature, and conveys life into all its parts. Born from above, the new nature of the believer pants after the *perfection* of his native heaven, and deprecates every thing that bars his progress or impedes his aspirations,—ever feeling the attraction of that Supreme Good to which all goodness gravitates. Born of the Spirit of *holiness*, a desire for sanctity completely possesses the believer, so that he often rejoices in tribulation, accepts the furnace, and exults in the flames, if, by passing through them, he may lose his *impurity*, and emerge in the likeness of his God. Nor does he rest until the impression of the Divine image upon his soul is complete and entire. And this is the very design of the Spirit of God in his repentance, and faith, and adoption. When Elisha, the man of God, restored to life the son of the Shunamite woman, he did not more carefully extend himself over the whole surface of the body, adjusting his eyes, and mouth, and hands to the corresponding parts of the organs of the deceased youth, than the whole body might revive, than the Holy Spirit applies himself to every part of our moral being, to resuscitate, to restore, to sanctify the whole. He leaves no dead, or palsied, or diseased part, but diffuses life, and activity and health throughout the entire frame,—forming the soul into a mould, from which it receives the unmaimed and entire image of the Redeemer's "righteousness and true holiness:" and this is what Methodism calls "*entire sanctification*," or "Christian perfection;" which is not angelic perfection,—or the perfection of unfallen Adam,—or freedom from human infirmity,—or exemption from error in judgment; but it is (as Mr. Wesley expresses it in the words of Inspiration) "to be renewed in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness,"—"to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and soul, and strength." In this state there is humbleness of mind, gentleness, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, charity; and at the same time "a peace that passeth all understanding, a joy unspeakable and full of glory."

"Eternal Sunshine of the spotless mind;  
 Each prayer accepted, and each wish resign'd:  
 Desires composed, affections ever even,  
 Tears that delight, and sighs that waft to heaven."<sup>2</sup>

3. There is one topic more under this head which I should not be justified in omitting in the present review, as it is a topic of importance, and has been made the pretext of much biting sarcasm in the religious world. The topic to which I refer is, what we call, *Christian experience*; which is supposed by many to be a mere imagination—to be nothing more than the working up of our own minds into a fancy of something which can have no foundation in reality or truth; and is, therefore, an enthusiastic delusion or the cant of hypocrisy. Nothing can be more erroneous than such notions of Christian experience. Christian experience, as viewed by Methodism, is the present conscious possession of the benefits of the Gospel which relate to this life, and which prepare us for the pure and perfect enjoyment of heaven. Before this is denounced as a delusion, let it be considered,—First, whether the benefits of the Gospel are not a sober and divine reality—such as repentance, faith, pardon, adoption, purity, and the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, fidelity, meekness and temperance? If these benefits are not a mere fancy, but the richest gifts of Divine munificence, let it be considered,—Secondly, whether the evidence which necessarily accompanies the possession of them is not the very highest and strongest of which the human mind is susceptible? When a man's understanding is enlightened with the truths of the Gospel; when his conscience is awakened, so that he turns from his sins and is humbled, abased, and ashamed before God on account of them; when the "*remembrance of his sins is grievous unto him and the burden intolerable*;"\* when he is enabled to believe in Jesus Christ to the saving of his soul, and fully relies upon the Saviour for pardon and acceptance with God, and is graciously accepted in the Beloved; must not such a person be *conscious of what has taken place within him, of the act of his mind, and the change in his views and feelings, his hopes and his joys*? It is very true a man who has never seen or *felt* himself "a miserable offender;" who has never been made a partaker of the "*peace of God which passeth all understanding*," can form no just conception of it. If a man had never seen colours, he could not form any true notion of them; if he had never felt pleasure or pain, he could not understand the nature of either the one or the other. So it is in Christian experience, "*the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit, because they are spiritually discerned*;"† it involves a

\* Communion Service of the Church of England.

† 1 Cor. ii. 14.

“white stone” of pardon, and a “new name” of adoption; “a death unto sin and a new birth unto righteousness;”\* which no man knows or can know but him that receiveth it;† but which the subjects of it as easily distinguish from the feelings, or consciousness arising from other things, as you distinguish the touch from smell, or seeing from hearing. For if he that “believeth on the Son of God has (as St. John says) the witness in himself;” if (as St. Paul teaches) “being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ;” if (as St. Peter declares) “even though we see him not, yet believing in Jesus we rejoice with a joy unspeakable and full of glory;”‡ must he not be as conscious and certain of it as he is of his own existence? Can he have a “witness in himself;” and yet be ignorant of it? Can he have “peace with God,” and yet be unconscious of any divine tranquillity? Can he “rejoice with unspeakable joy,” and feel no gladness? Does not our internal consciousness carry as strong a conviction of reality with it, as our external senses; our seeing, or hearing, or touching, or tasting, or smelling? Yes, when the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us,

“Soft peace she brings, wherever she arrives,  
She builds our quiet, as she forms our lives;  
Lays the rough paths of peevish nature even,  
And opens in each breast a little heaven.”

Such then, my friends, is the doctrinal, and practical, and experimental miniature portrait of the Gospel as delineated by the pencil of Methodism. Though the sketch drawn of it on the present occasion is rough and imperfect, is not the evangelical picture, as a whole, correct, amiable, and inviting? securing “to God all the glory, to man the boundless bliss.” Opening before us a career of glory in which angels themselves are our competitors; the Methodistic view of the Gospel would have us stop at no attainment till the will of God be done on earth as it is done in heaven; it would have us rest satisfied with no reward, till we can mingle the radiance of our crowns with the emanations of the paternal throne.

V. The *success* of Methodism in Upper Canada, and its influence upon the religious and social condition and character of society, is the last topic to which I shall call your attention. This topic pre-

\* Catechism of the Church of England.

† Rev. ii. 17.

‡ 1 John v. 10. Rom. v. 1. 1 Peter i. 8.

sents a wide field of delightful meditation ; but I must restrict myself to a very few brief statements.

In order to estimate the success with which the labours of Methodism have been crowned in this Province, we must go back to the period of its first introduction, and call to mind the then physical and moral condition of the country. A few weeks before I left this Province for England, in November, 1835, I was requested to preach\* at the opening of a commodious chapel in Adolphustown, Midland District ; which chapel was a rebuilding of the oldest Methodist Chapel in Upper Canada, and was erected on the ground where the first Methodist Society was established,—an event which, I was informed, took place the 20th of February, 1791. At that period the whole Province, from Lake St. Francis to Sandwich, presented an almost unbroken forest, with here and there a spot won from the surrounding wilderness. The entire population of the country but little exceeded the present population of the city of Toronto. The scites of our present towns were then forests ; the country was without roads, and the rivers and streams were without bridges ; wild beasts and migratory tribes constituted the principal lords of the soil ; the scattered and isolated settlers possessed, for the most part, but a slender, and except for the chase, inadequate means of subsistence. One Episcopal Clergyman at Kingston, another in Bath, and a third in Niagara,† constituted the sole religious instructors of the country. As for Methodism, it was only known by hear-say to the dispersed inhabitants, as a subject of ridicule and scorn. Its principles were deemed absurd ; its services and society meetings were ridiculed as enthusiastic ; its Ministers were viewed as ignorant, idle, hypocritical adventurers, and political spies ; some of them fell victims to Magisterial persecution ; up to a very recent period, Methodism has been regarded by many leading Magistrates and other civil officers throughout the Province, and by the most prominent members of the Executive Government, as dangerous to the supremacy of British power ;—

\* The *Quarterly Meeting* of the *Bay of Quinte* Circuit kindly requested a copy of the sermon preached on that occasion for publication. With the request of the Preachers and friends composing that meeting, I partially engaged to comply ; but being unexpectedly required a few weeks after to proceed to England, I have been unable to fulfil my engagement. Those who were present at the opening of the chapel referred to will perceive that the necessity and advisableness of my doing so now, are altogether superseded by this circumstance, as well as from others, that the principal topics which gave interest to the subject on that occasion, are embraced in the present discourse.

† Messrs. *Stuart, Langhorn, and Addison.*

and the combined influence of men of wealth and learning, together with the Civil Government itself, from the Representative of the King (with few exceptions) down to the Church Sexton, has been arrayed against the progress of Methodism, and bent, as far as the spirit of the age would permit, upon its extermination.

Such were the circumstances under which the standard of Methodism was raised in this Province ; and such are the formidable obstacles which have opposed its progress. It had no pecuniary resources but the voluntary liberality of those who embraced its principles. Its doctrines and precepts waged war with the prevalent vices and popular prejudices of the country. Its Teachers were men of humble rank, as well as of humble literary or educational pretensions. They, however, well understood one truth : " That Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ;" and having felt that to be to themselves the " power of God unto salvation," the ' love of Christ constrained' them to declare it to others. In the spirit of primitive Christianity those devoted men went forth, not counting their lives dear unto them, but in weariness and poverty, in the extremes of heat and cold, at all seasons and in all kinds of weather—sometimes whole nights in the wilderness, surrounded by the wild beasts of the desert,—they traced their way by blazed trees and Indian bye-paths, and forded creeks and rivers—in some instances at the risk of their lives—to testify to the pioneer settlers of the country " the glorious Gospel of God our Saviour ;" and, like the first Apostles, they " ceased not in every house to teach and preach Jesus Christ, the Lord working with them, confirming their word by signs following," in that He caused it to come to multitudes, " not in word only, but in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

" When He first the work begun,  
Small and feeble was his day :  
Since the word has swiftly run—  
Still it wins its widening way."

This is true in a *numerical, civil, and religious* point of view.

1. Viewing the progress of Methodism *numerically*, I will add nothing to the following statistical statement :

In 1792, there were 2 Preachers and 165 members ; in 1800 there were 6 Preachers and 933 members ; in 1810, there were 12 Preachers and 2,597 members ; in 1820, there were 29 Preachers

and 5,383 members ; in 1830, there were 62 Preachers and 11,348 members ; at present there are 101 Preachers and 15,453 members ; besides regular and occasional hearers.

2. The progress of Methodism in a *civil* and *social* point of view is equal to its numerical increase. It has triumphed over wide-spread and deep-rooted prejudices, by practical proofs that it is not a congeries of enthusiastic impulses, but a consistent system of scriptural truth, rational experience, and sound morality. It has silenced a double-tongued calumny, by a scriptural adherence to the principles of civil and religious liberty in the dark days of bigotted exclusion and despotic invasion ; and by a scriptural support of the constituted civil compact and authorities of the land, in a season of anarchical encroachment. It has levelled to the very ground the inquisitorial walls of political proscription, by obtaining, after many an arduous struggle, the enactment of laws for the security of its chapel property and legal celebration of its marriage and other religious ceremonies, by its own ministers and according to its own forms. It has refuted in the face of the world the oft-repeated imputation that it honoured "ignorance as the mother of devotion," by unprecedented efforts to promote the general education of the youth of the country upon the principles of the Bible ; efforts which have received the highest sanction of Royalty on the one hand, and the strongest approbation of the Representative voice of the Province on the other, together with the liberal contributions of thousands of its inhabitants ; efforts which I pray Almighty God may be a thousand times more successful than the most sanguine anticipations of their projectors and advocates and friends. Methodism is a liberal contributor to the general diffusion of useful knowledge, and is a friend to every art and science but one ; it does not teach, and God forbid it ever should teach, the *art of War* ! It implants in the bosom of the red-man the God-like heart of *love*, instead of the demon spirit of *war*. It virtually takes its stand between hostile armies, and holding in its hand the olive branch of peace, it echoes the words of Inspiration through all their ranks,—“ Love one another, convert your instruments of death into implements of husbandry, and learn war no more.”

3. But there is another and a higher view in which we are to survey the success of Methodism in Upper Canada. It is in the *moral* transformations of which it has been the divinely-owned instrument,—in the *spiritual* achievements it has effected, that its appropriate office and character are seen in their true light. Contemplate



its march, and observe its train. Its *march* is one of *love*, in the name of Him who loved the world even to the gift of his only-begotten Son; its *train* is one of *grace*, in the fruits of His grace, "who, though he was rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might become rich." The vicious man becomes virtuous; the drunkard becomes sober; the profane swearer becomes devout; the sensualist becomes chaste; the extortioner makes restitution; the cruel man becomes merciful; the lofty looks of the proud are humbled; intellectual darkness and moral death become light and life in the Lord; and the child of the devil and the heir of hell becomes the child of God and the heir of heaven. In the fulfilment of its Divine commission, Methodism has visited the degraded and barbarous aboriginal Indian tribes; and its advent among them has been like the bursting forth of a fountain in the heart of a desert,—the waste is changed into the garden of the Lord. Those who have been regarded as the leavings and refuse of our species, if not actually akin to the beasts that perish, have been enfranchised with the feelings and rights of men, and the aspirations and blessings of Christians; thus retrieving the character and dignity of the slandered human form, and adding new glory to the lustre of Christianity. The orgies of debasing idolatry have been succeeded by the elevating worship of the true God; villages and farms have succeeded to the wilderness and the chase; new light has been given to their minds, and immortality to their hopes. In them we have the modern representatives of those Corinthians of whom St. Paul says—you have been "fornicators, and idolators, and adulterers, and drunkards, but ye are washed, and sanctified, and justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God." They are the genuine counterparts of those Thessalonians, who "turned from dumb idols to serve the living and true God,"—and of those Jews who had been "hateful and hating one another," but were afterwards "living in the unity of the Spirit and the bonds of peace."

We confidently rest the claims of Methodism—like those of primitive Christianity—on an appeal to its practical effects. "Men do not gather grapes of thorns, nor figs from thistles; the tree is known by its fruits." Concede to Methodism the benefit and justice of this, the Redeemer's own criterion, and we readily await the decision of truth and reason. Follow it in its progress from place to place, and the path of its *success* will be traced by a visible and essential improvement in piety and virtue, public order and individual happiness;

in the enlargement of that kingdom which is "righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."<sup>\*</sup>

I speak in the presence of many who are eye and ear-witnesses of the sober accuracy of these statements. Erase from the minds of the inhabitants every ray of knowledge, every religious principle and social feeling, every impulse of benevolence and glow of patriotism, which has been directly or indirectly created and fostered by Methodism, and I submit to friend or foe, whether this Province would occupy its present elevated position among the Colonies of British North America.

In conclusion, I cannot forbear remarking to my Fathers and fellow-labourers in the Ministry, (at whose feet I would gladly sit and learn,) the almost overwhelming *responsibility* in which this subject involves every *Methodist Minister*. Under any circumstances we are not isolated individuals. The eternal interests of hundreds of thousands, with successive generations to the end of time, are connected with our work. But we are specially entrusted with a system of scriptural truth and discipline, which possesses unrivalled elements and powers of extension. Our Divine Master says, "to *you* is this mighty machinery committed to work until I come." A wide and open field lies before us; many parts of which must remain or degenerate into a moral wilderness if they are not cultivated by us. We are, by a succession of events, placed in a prominent position before the public. Much is expected of us. The eyes of thousands

\* "To the disinterested and indefatigable exertions of these pious men this Province owes much. At an early period of its history, when it was thinly settled, and its inhabitants were scattered through the wilderness, and destitute of all means of religious instruction, these ministers of the Gospel, animated by Christian zeal and benevolence, at the sacrifice of health and interest, carried among the people the blessings, consolations, and sanctions of our holy religion. Their influence and instruction have been conducive, in a degree which cannot be easily estimated, to the reformation of their hearers from licentiousness, and the diffusion of correct morals, the foundation of all sound loyalty and social order."

"The great and surprising change which has occurred within a short period of time in the character and condition of large bodies of the Mississagua Indians is well known. From a state of vice and ignorance, wretchedness and degradation, almost brutal, they have been brought to habits of industry, order, and temperance, a thirst for knowledge, a profession of the Christian religion, and apparently a cordial and humble belief of its truths, and enjoyment of its blessings. In this change the Methodists have been chiefly instrumental. They have manifested the most benevolent zeal in accomplishing it; they have sent Missionaries and established schools among them, which are supported by voluntary contributions: and they are still labouring among them with the same disinterested spirit, and the same surprising encouragement and success."  
—*Report and Address of the Upper Canada House of Assembly, 1828-29.*

are upon us. We are observed by foes, by friends, by men, by angels, and by God the Judge of all. The best form is nothing without the power.—For *me* to lift up the voice of exhortation would be as presumptuous as I trust it is superfluous; but in view of our responsibility, our calling, and our work, may I be allowed to reiterate the words of the memorable Matthew Henry, “Let Jesus Christ be all and in all. Let us study Christ—preach Christ—live for Christ.” In a spirit of holy exultation, may each of us be enabled daily to adopt the language of the devoted Henry Martyn, “Blessed be God, I FEEL myself to be his Minister.” And when we “cease to work and live,” may it be ours to say with the apostolic Hali-burton, “I loved to live preaching Christ, and I love to die preaching Christ.”

We may derive ample encouragement by casting an eye of retrospect over the past. To not a few present can I not say,—

“Saw ye not the cloud arise,  
Little as a human hand?  
Now it spreads along the skies,  
Hangs o’er all the thirsty land.”

We are indeed encompassed with difficulties; but are they more formidable than those which have been already overcome? We are met by opposition; but is it more powerful than that which has heretofore yielded to the force of truth, and melted before the smiles of heaven upon us? We have a great work to do; but it is not greater than when our predecessors commenced it. We are conscious of weakness and deficiency; but we are not warfaring at our own charge, or in our own strength. We are employed in His work who has said, “*Lo I am with you always;*” *Lo I am with you*, to qualify and succeed you in whatever work I call you to; *Lo I am with you*, to comfort you by my presence and Spirit when your hearts are grieved; *Lo I am with you*, to defend and strengthen you in your trials, though all men forsake you. Then may each of his servants say,—

“If thou my Jesus still art nigh,  
Cheerful I live, and cheerful die;  
Secure, when mortal comforts flee,  
To find ten thousand worlds in Thee.”

Nor does a view of the *future* afford less encouragement than a retrospect of the past; not merely from the hope and prospect of

gathering our several flocks and renewing our acquaintance before the Throne of God and of the Lamb, where he that soweth and he that reapeth shall rejoice together, but in the certain *success* of our work from the *unchangeable character*, the *incomparable excellence*, and *omnipotent power* of that Gospel which we are commanded to preach to every creature. ‘Perfect from the beginning, the Gospel has remained unchanged, while the arts and sciences, and systems of dateless antiquity, have yielded to the demand for improvement. It has seen every thing human, contemporaneous with its origin, renovated and changed again; but, like the Jewish Lawgiver, when he had survived his generation, its eye is not dim, nor is its natural force abated. Our Gospel maintains its post in the van of improvement, and points the way to enterprise and hope as the anointed leader of mankind. No living springs of good shall gush from the depths of human skill and enterprise, which have not been smitten into existence by this rod of heaven; no forms of excellence shall arise to bless the world, of which it is not the parent and the perfect type. Only give the Gospel room to plant its moral apparatus, (and the providence of God is giving it room in every part of the world,) and let it obtain the necessary fulcrum for its powers, (and the Mighty Redeemer has furnished that fulcrum,) and it will employ a lever which shall move a world from the dark vicinity of hell, and lift it up into the sun-light and neighbourhood of Heaven.’

Even so be it, Lord God of Hosts! and let the whole earth be filled with the majesty of thy glory. Amen and Amen.