

COMMUNICATIONS.

To the Hon. and Rev. Doctor Strachan, &c. No. 7.

Having shown that an Ecclesiastical establishment weakens a Government and disunites its subjects, is the means of corrupting the clergy, laity and nation in which it is tolerated—and that the church of England is not the established church of these Provinces, I now show that according to your own principles, the church of England, ought not to be established in Canada with peculiar legal privileges and endowments.

The foundation of your claims in behalf of the church of England, as an Ecclesiastical Establishment, is built upon the number of her members and the tendency of the population to her communion. The present Bishop of Quebec in his late circular, advances the same reasons.—The late Bishop of Quebec and his clergy, in their Report for 1823, (as given in the appendix (No. 1.) to your observations on the clergy reserves) produce the same argument as the principal ground of their claims to exclusive patronage and support. (1.) And it is the settlements of almost all advocates of a religious Establishment, that it must include at least a majority of the population—all of whose sentiments may be summed up in the following words of that great Philosopher and Divine, Dr. Paley: "A great sometimes presents itself, whether the religion which the chief Magistrate ought to establish be that which he himself professes, or that which he observes to prevail amongst the majority of the people. In my opinion the advantage lies on the side of the people; and this opinion, if it be assented to, makes it the duty of the Magistrate, in the choice of the religion which he establishes, to consult the faith of the nation rather than his own." (Works Vol. III. p. 462.) According to these principles—inconsistent with which it is diabolical to establish a religion—how can the church of England be the established church of these Provinces?—From the unanimous testimony of nearly 50 uncontradicted witnesses before the committee of the House of Assembly, it appears that 2 or 3, or 4 denominations of christians in Canada, are generally more numerous than the church of England. By a report of the "Society for the propagating of the Gospel in Foreign Parts," (for the year 1821.) we are informed that the greatest number of church of England communicants at any one time during that year, was 367. Allowing that the communicants of your church have doubled since 1821—which is a greater increase than we grant to either denominations—they now amount to 734. We learn from an authenticated, though very imperfect report given into the select committee, that of the Baptist church in this Province, there are 1435 communicants—of the Presbyterians not in communion with the Kirk of Scotland, there are 848—of the Methodists and Dunkers, 1165—of the Methodists 9009—of the Kirk of Scotland, there is no return; but from Mr. Morris' evidence, who doubtless has had an opportunity of knowing, and whose well vouched testimony would not suffer him to deviate from what he conceived to be truth, it seems her communicants are quite numerous. The Quakers likewise have given no returns; but when it is considered that there are large settlements of these peaceable and upright people on Yongestreet—in Whitby—in the Newcastle, Midland, Niagara, and in different parts of the London District, besides other places with which I am not acquainted, it is certain that they must form a very considerable and important portion of the population. The Roman Catholics are probably equal in number to any other denomination in the Province. Several other sects less numerous I have not mentioned.—When compared with the communicants of all these denominations collectively or separately, what proportion do the 734 communicants of the church of England bear to them? What principles of justice—what principles of sound policy—what principles of the advocates of Establishments—nay, what pretensions of your own can justify the constituting of the church of England the established church of Canada? No, Sir, from this consideration alone it would be unjust, impolitic and antichristian, to establish the church of England with peculiar privileges and endowments. In the 31st page of your observations on the Reserves, you object to the Establishment of the Kirk of Scotland, and say, "To put other landlords (besides the clergy of the church of England) over the people, to exalt another body over their heads, will make the most moderate think themselves justified in expressing their dissatisfaction, and they will express it strongly." If to give the clergy of the Kirk a share of the Reserves, "will make the most moderate of the people express their dissatisfaction strongly," will not the putting of the clergy of the church less numerous, to be the "landlords," of the people, exalting them (the clergy of the C. of E.) over their heads, give much greater dissatisfaction, cause the "most moderate," to express it much more strongly—"be much more unjust, oppressive and cruel?" The people have imbibed other views of the meek servants of Him who had not where to lay his head, than to make them their "landlords" or to "exalt them over their heads, and in this, as Dr. Dunlop said in his evidence before the committee, "a very large body of the church of England concur." Therefore according to your own principles the church of England ought not to be established in Canada.

But does the moral and religious influence which the church of England exerts upon the inhabitants of these Provinces authorize any pretensions to exclusive patronage?—Are her members less disposed to pride to extravagance, to ambition, to intemperance, to covetousness, to profaneness, to gambling, &c. and are they more exemplary, upright and pious than any other class of the community? Are the parishes (if I may call them so) of church of England clergymen, more Godly in their deportment, than other neighbourhoods where no such clergymen are settled? Or do they become more holy by the ministrations of your clergymen? Are such parishes more loyal than any other parts of the Province? To bring my enquiries to a point I would ask, are the inhabitants (at least that portion of them who attend the ministrations of your church) of York, the Great Pandemonium of church of Englandism in this Province, more meek, evangelical, and Godlike, than the people in various parts of this Province in which a church of England clergyman never put his foot?—Without fear of contradiction I am bold to say, they are not. In making these observations, I mean no reflection whatever upon the morals of the members of your church.—Of them the public must, and is the best Judge. Nor do I intend any unjust insinuation against the lives or labours of your clergymen. My object is to show, that doing them utmost justice, the clergymen of the church of England, have comparatively done very little towards improving the morals of the Canadian population; and therefore, it is unfair on the one hand, and impolitic and improvident on the other, to appropriate about £10,000 sterling annually (which is the present expenditure of your church alone) to the clergymen of your church, while the clergymen of other denominations, who instruct the great body of the people, receive not one farthing from the Government.

Now, sir, will the experiment already tried of supporting clergymen of your church, justify a continuance of it, or the establishing of that church in Canada? You wish to multiply the number of your clergymen to 3000. To support these, according to your present economy, will require upwards of £40,000 sterling annually; and yet you say your never will cost this Province one farthing!!! The support of 46 Methodist itinerant clergymen in this Province, amounts to less

than £2000 per annum, and the whole expenditure of their Missionaries, Teachers and establishments among the Indian tribes, from their commencement to the present time, is between one and two thousand pounds.—Have the Methodists made no progress—have they been annihilated in Canada, (as you say the church of England would be, if the reserves were taken from her) and have they had no success in taming whole bodies of Indians and in christianizing whole tribes? Yet the Methodists have not received one farthing from the government. The merit of a ministry must be estimated by the effects and success that attend it. This is the ground in which you have made your claims in behalf of the church of England. Judging then from this infallible criterion ought the clergymen of your church to be "exalted over the heads of the clergy of other denominations" (in your own adopted words) and become their "landlords"? God forbid! Policy says it will never do.—Justice says it must not be—and religion, pure religion, sweeps at the mention of it. Therefore, upon your own principles, your church ought not to be established in Canada.

These observations introduce another and a more weighty argument against such a measure, namely, the general opinion and wishes of the people—*vox populi*—on which, as Paley says, civil government itself is founded.

In your Sermon (p. 22) you call the House of Commons, in England, the voice of the nation. You say—"The feeble proposition of Mr. Wilberforce (viz. that it was the duty of the Legislature to promote the interest and happiness of India) was assented to with a chilling coldness, the nation expressing no feeling on the occasion." Upon your own principles then, as well as those of general consent, our House of Commons is the voice of this Province. And what does that say respecting the establishment of your church in this Colony? It says in a late address to the King—"Nothing could cause more alarm and grief in the minds of your Majesty's subjects in this Province, than the apprehension that there was a design on the part of your Majesty's government, to establish, as a part of the state, one or more church or denomination of christians in this Province, with rights and endowments, not granted to your Majesty's subjects in general, of other denominations, who are equally conscientious and deserving, and equally loyal and attached to your Majesty's person and government." Shall the church of England be established contrary to the numerous petitions, the wishes of the people, to the voice of the Province? No, says the Scots clergy, "The most essential requisite to promote the prosperity of new settlements, is to make a provision for churches and schools suitable to the wants and wishes of at least the majority of the population. This we are persuaded, is the prime cause of the prosperity of the United States, and of any superiority which they may possess over these Provinces." (Pastoral letter p. 12.) The wishes of a majority of the population are, that not "one or more church" (as the above cited address, says) or denomination" ought to be established in this Province. And says the celebrated Doctor Paley, than whom a higher authority could not be produced on this subject, and who therefore cannot be referred to too frequently—"If the dissenters from the establishment become a majority of the people, the establishment itself ought to be altered or qualified,—if there exist among the different sects of the country such a parity of numbers, interest, and power, as to render the preference of one sect to the rest, and the choice of that sect, a matter of hazardous success, and of doubtful election, some plan similar to that which is meditated in North America, and which we have given in a preceding part (2.) of the present chapter, though encumbered with many difficulties, may perhaps suit better this divided state of public opinions than the construction of any national church whatever." (Works Vol. III. p. 466.)—Hence according to these principles it is utterly impossible for the church of England to be established in Canada.

Another and if possible, still more serious objection to your intended establishment is, the political civil and religious liberties of the people. On this point I can do no better than adopt the precise words of the Scots clergy, which in addition to their intrinsic merit and pith of argument, carry with them the authority of eleven learned and highly respectable clergymen: "How formidable in this respect (viz. to the cause of political and civil, as well as religious liberty) would be a numerous body of clergy, such as the Doctor Strachan prospectively contemplates as likely to exist at no distant period of time, supported by funds altogether independent of the people—we might almost add of the government or state—and having not only the exclusive possession, but the exclusive management of the church lands and their Revenues—invested at the same time with the sole controul and direction of education, and by natural consequence, connecting exclusively with their own establishment, and rendering subservient to its aggrandisement, Universities, Colleges, Schools, &c. Add to all this the political influence which they could not fail to possess, and to exercise in the Legislative and Executive departments of the government, through their Episcopal head; and the no less formidable influence which would be united in their collective body, in virtue of the particular, personal, and local influence exercised by their numerous members, from the greatest to the least, distributed through every part of the country, and from the peculiar constitution of the church of England, possessing every facility for combining, extending, and perpetuating that influence! Such an establishment would become doubly formidable in a country where there is no check or counterpoise to the clerical order, in the splendour of royalty, in the weight and dignity of a hereditary aristocracy, or in the spirit, virtue, and independence of a numerous and enlightened gentry. Such an exclusive establishment, it must not be disguised, would be as perilous to the civil as to the religious liberties of this country. (3.) Nor does Ecclesiastical history warrant the conclusion, however pleasing it might be, that clerical communities, or that a Protestant hierarchy, if scope and opportunity were given for that purpose, might not step in the footsteps of papal ambition.—The history of Scotland during the reign of the Stuarts, and the past and present state of Ireland, afford a melancholy proof that the same causes, in similar circumstances, will produce the same effects." (Pastoral letter p. 13, 14.) You say in your sermon (p. 16) that "in the British nation the light of freedom burns with the brightest radiance, and

the rights and liberties of man are best understood and most abundantly enjoyed—a lofty sense of independence is of universal growth"—and that you wish to "infuse into the inhabitants of this Province the same feelings." Now, sir, as the establishment of the church of England in Canada, has a direct tendency, according to the above high authority and cogent argument of the Scots clergy, to extinguish the "light of liberty"—to endanger the "rights and liberties of men"—to check and destroy the "growth of a lofty sense of independence," it necessarily follows by undeniable inference, that she ought not to be established.

But probably the most weighty argument against the establishment of your church in Canada, and that which demands the most serious attention, is the "ill effects it will have on the church itself"—and this like all the foregoing shall be an *Argumentum ad hominem*.

It must be admitted upon all hands that your whole aim in all your extraordinary movements, is to advance the interests of the church of England, and cause it to spread over the whole Province—and will the establishment of it do this? You say yes—take the liberty to say no. This is the last and most important point at issue.

It is proper here to enquire a moment, in what the real prosperity of a church consists? If it consists in wealth, secular power, & exterior grandeur, I admit that the establishment of your church will promote its prosperity. But, sir, you well know that a church, as well as an individual, may be increased in goods, be exalted by human power, and imposingly glitter in all the magnificence of external adornments, while she is, in the sight of Him who judgeth righteous judgment, nothing but *sounding brass or tinkling cymbal—poor and miserable, and blind, and naked*. This was the case with the Jewish church in the times of some of the Asiatic churches in the first ages of the christian era—with the nominally christian church during the dark ages, and I may add at later periods of her history. On the other hand, a church, like the primitive churches, may have neither gold nor silver, and yet be rich in faith and an heir of the kingdom—may be persecuted by Kings and Emperors, and yet, like Mount Zion, never be moved—may be harassed and oppressed, and yet, like the Israelites in Egypt, abundantly multiply.

I apprehend that among the essential requisites to the prosperity of a church will be found, 1st. The holiness of its ministry; 2nd. The purity of its practical doctrines; and 3rdly. The spirituality and perhaps increase of its members.

You wish a legal provision for your clergy in order to give weight and dignity to their ministry. On this an able divine, who was a sincere christian and withal a member of the church of England, makes the following pointed remarks: "Much good may such a participation do them! They themselves know how much it amounts to—Pope says truly—
"Worth makes the man, and want of it the fellow;
The rest is all but leather or prunello."

If such a provision be any wise essential to the true dignity and usefulness of a ministry, the apostles and their successors were altogether destitute of dignity and success in their ministry—seeing they—yes the greatest of them—*wrought with their own hands, and even their master was ministered unto by poor women*. And no sooner was the ministry enriched with a legal provision, than it was debased and its usefulness, lost. "Men began as bishop Newton says, to enter fraudulently into the church," and they have continued the degrading horrid practice ever since. The effect of your fancied dignity was such, that Lord Burleigh, speaking of persons entering into the Episcopal department, said, that "the places changed the men"—made them lazy and covetous.

Your next object in enriching your church with one seventh of the Province and the great liberality of the British Government, is to hold out a sufficient prize to induce young men of virtue, talent and attainment to enter into the ministry. To this the excellent Cowper answers—"agreed. But the prize held out in the Scriptures is of a very different kind; and our Ecclesiastical baits are too often snapped by the worthless and persons of no attainments at all. They are indeed incentives to avarice and ambition, but not to those acquisitions by which only the ministerial function can be adorned—*zeal for the salvation of souls, humility and self denial*." (Letter to the Rev. William Urwin.)

It is plain therefore that the establishing of your church, will neither contribute to the sacred dignity, nor to the purity of the ministry, but will only tend to debase the one and corrupt the other. Therefore on account of the holiness of the ministry, your church ought not to be established.—And when the whole head is sick, will not the whole heart be faint? When the fountain is polluted, will not the stream be impure? When the priests are blinded with aloth, avarice and ambition, will not the "people be led into the ditch?" This leads me to observe, in the second place, that to establish the church of England in Canada, will corrupt the purity of her practical doctrines, and consequently, will be fatal to her prosperity.

It has been shown from the authority of bishop Newton and Dr. Mosheim, that the establishment of religion under Constantine was the means of corrupting the practice of the church, and from the testimony of several references and Prelates of your church, that it had the same tendency in England; it will now be seen by the following observations of Dr. Milner, that it had the same effect on her practical doctrines, and his testimony will have additional weight when it is considered, that he devotes a chapter of his history to advocate establishments.—Speaking of the church under Constantine, Dr. Milner observes—"The spirit of godliness was now low. The external appearance was splendid, external piety flourished, monastic societies in some places were also growing; but faith, love and heavenly mindedness appear very rare. The doctrine of real conversion was very much lost, or external baptism was placed in its stead, and the true doctrine of justification by faith, and the true practical use of a crucified Saviour for troubled consciences, were scarce to be seen. There was much outward religion, but this could not make men saints in heart and life. True humility and charity were little known in the christian world while superstition and self righteousness were making rapid progress, and the real gospel of Christ was hid from men who professed it." (Townsend Abrid.

p. 164.) Similar causes under similar circumstances, will invariably produce the same effects; and the intelligent reader in the present observation, even in the absence of the services of the learned historian, will see for the sake of her practical doctrine the church of England ought not to be established in Canada.—And if her practical and practical doctrines are debased and corrupted, where will be the spirituality and increase of her true members?

It is true, if your church were established in this country, her wealth and power attract many to the ranks of both her clergy and laity, but these, as the Scots clergy quaintly remark, "will be actuated by a selfish and avaricious spirit, and a selfish interest"—will in reality do her no good, but will spiritually lift up their heads against her. By the architecture of your pulpit church of England may become a pyramid building, but the voice of the church will not be heard in it—she may be gorgeously adorned, like whited sepulchre, but she will be a sink of corruption; and she will be reared to the clouds, but she will be an inverted pyramid it will become, the unstable the higher it is raised? The natural light of your church and the natural light of the people will be lost in the secular policy and worldly aggrandisement and she will be seen, like ancient Rome, majestic in ruin—lifeless and dead. True prosperity requires that she should be established. Facts prove it so. The evidence before the committee, you say, "In the state of New-York where no aid is given for the support of the church, there appears to be the same tendency towards the church," that is, the same tendency as you had formerly stated, was the church of England in this Province. Your venerable friend Dr. Mountain, in a sermon on Ordination (p. 27.) observes "among our neighbours in the United States the [Episcopal] church is much less in a flourishing and increasing condition. Now, sir, if the tendency of the population in the N. Y. state, is towards the Episcopal church, and if in the United States, "most decidedly in a flourishing and increasing condition," without any "foreign aid" if she is, like a drooping plant, in Canada, (as has been seen in a preceding part of this letter) and that after having received more than a £100,000 sterling "foreign aid," is it not sound policy to pray for its removal? Is it not an able argument against the establishment of the church of England in Canada, that the church of England, like that in the United States, to look for the support of the clergy to the "free will offerings of the people"—let her success depend upon evangelical doctrines which her articles and Homilies contain—upon the beauty and excellence of her liturgy—[when like the U. States it is purged from external matter and tedious repetition]—trimmery in many respects of her ritual constitution [especially] when on the model of that in the United States, and upon the labours of an enlightened and pious ministry—free her from the secular power and worldly politics, though some of her present hearers—like the covetous Jews, who, they would increase their wealth and ever sought to crown our Saviour's spear upon her with their teeth—some of her hirelings, who have been to the priests office for a piece of morsel of meat, may to her great advantage desert her—though some of her gainers may be succeeded by the plainness of primitive simplicity—yet her "intrinsic excellence [as the justice of Mr. Rolph said in his evidence before the select committee] she will increase her tolling bells will make many leap for joy—thousands of happy men will be seen cheerfully travelling "church yard path along"—her sanctuaries will be the house of God and the heaven to her thronging assemblies, ministers will speak as those having authority, and not as the Scribes and Pharisees, and will be greatly enlarged—their words will be prospered and rejoice in other denominations will behold her people and imitate it—piety will flourish all and happiness every where shall be seen. Then, will foreign natives and domestic inhabitants exclaim—"Happy Canada! shed art thou among the Provinces of earth!" In this is God known, and in his richest mercies. They pass clothed with flocks, thy valleys are green with corn; they shout for joy, they are become palaces. Thou receivest the life freely, thou sittest as queen of the nations. Thy political constitution is the glory of the world; and thy civil and religious rights are so confirmed and established, that they shall sit every man upon his own vine and fig tree, and shall make him afraid. Industry and activity every where seen in thee, and contentment is depicted in every countenance. *That people that is in such a case: That is that people whose God is the Lord!*

I have the honor to be, Rev. Sir, Your Humble Servant, E. RYLAND.

Cobourg, 27th May, 1828.

(1.) The following are the statements of the late Bishop and his clergy in 1823 from these extracts, which unfold the policy of the church of England in Canada, and which I will therefore give at a reasonable length, the reader will be able to judge how far the British Government has been correctly informed respecting the religious state of Canada.—"When new missions are established in any quarter, we do those persons rapidly join, who are yet particularly attached to any denomination, but even Presbyterians and Congregationalists attend public worship with families, so that on many occasions the neighbourhood become united to the church, and not only are the dead buried according to its rites, but likewise the bodies of friends and relatives are frequently collected from private places of interment, and are consigned to the grave in the public church ground with the solemn offices of the church. Moreover their children are baptized, and are in the bosom of the church, and the number at length confirmed by the Lord, and thus a congregation is formed in a few years strongly attached to our Establishment. Even in those remote parts of the country, where the Methodist converts are the most active, so soon as the