

**THE WESLEYAN
VINDICATOR AND
CONSTITUTIONAL
METHODIST, NO. I-XII, 1850**

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The Wesleyan Vindicator and Constitutional Methodist, No. I-XII, 1850 by Samuel Jackson

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SAMUEL JACKSON

**THE WESLEYAN
VINDICATOR AND
CONSTITUTIONAL
METHODIST, NO. I-XII, 1850**

THE
WESLEYAN VINDICATOR

AND
CONSTITUTIONAL METHODIST.

EDITED BY THE
REV. SAMUEL JACKSON,
AND A SUB-COMMITTEE.

FOR THE YEAR MDCCCL.



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No. I.

PRICE 1d.

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EDITED BY THE REV. SAMUEL JACKSON,
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JANUARY, 1850.

THE CASE STATED.

THE object of the present publication, and the cause of its being issued, will be evident to readers from its title, as well as from the contents of our prospectus. Wesleyan Methodism has been assailed, both in its constitutional principles and in its administration: our object is to defend it from assailants, and to preserve the unsuspecting from being misled by them.

Reflecting men cannot be surprised that Methodism should thus be assailed: this has been the common lot of good systems, as well as of good men, in all times; it has been the case with Methodism and its promoters from the beginning. Like the genius of our British civilization, Methodism was cradled in the storm; and from the hardihood of its training, a more robust strength and enduring vitality have been the results. The profane and the worldly treated the Wesleys with persecuting scorn and derision; and, with the exception of a few men of superior Christian enlightenment, the Clergy of the Establishment strengthened the hands of the persecutors. Nor was danger to the new evangelic enterprise experienced merely from those without: perhaps it was greater from jealousy within. There were some, thus early, in our own Israel, who said of the Wesleys what Korah and his dissatisfied coadjutors said of Moses and Aaron: "Ye take too much upon you: wherefore lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?" John Wesley's reply was, that he had not sought the power and authority he possessed; others had voluntarily given it him, and, believing it to be a trust under God, he could not surrender it. But, perceiving that evil had already begun to work, and that there were indications of strifes and divisions among his assistants in

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preaching the Gospel, he was careful to bind them in a solemn written obligation to carry on Methodism, after his death, according to the principles on which he had founded it. And to insure this, as far as possible, he formally declared in writing those principles, and enrolled the "Deed of Declaration" in the High Court of Chancery.

What Mr. Wesley had feared, was realized soon after his death. It had been ever his earnest desire that his followers should not separate themselves from the Church of England. But the Societies had grown and multiplied; houses of worship had been erected; and the people desired and sought from the Conference the administration of the Sacraments in the chapels of the Connexion. To this the majority of the Trustees of chapels were opposed. But the Preachers hearkened to the voice of the people, and joined them in a struggle against the prejudices of the Trustees: they succeeded in giving the people the Sacraments. In this they did nothing but follow out the principles of their venerated Founder; Mr. Wesley having, at the close of his life, ordained several of his Preachers to administer the Sacraments, as well as to proclaim the word of mercy from the pulpit.

The danger to Methodism arose, in this early instance, from the attack of the Trustees upon the constitutional privileges of the Preachers, and their resistance to the Christian liberty of the people. Since then, the attacks made on Conference and on Methodism have arisen mainly from dissatisfied individuals,—pleading no infringement of their settled official privileges,—but professing to defend the abused rights and liberties of the members of our Societies. Presumptive proof of the right conduct of the Conference may be drawn from the fact, that it has thus ever placed itself between extremes: it withstood the Trustees; it withstands the *professed* champions of invaded rights and liberties. And why? Because it is not ignorant that persons, seeking their own ends, are ever ready to raise these cries of "Liberty," and, "The rights of the people." It remembers that such was the cry of Mr. Kilham, of the Leeds agitators, of Dr. Warren, and of the associates of each and all of them. They were *all* for "infusin': more of the liberal element," as they phrased it, "into the constitution of Methodism." Not being able to accomplish their object, they separated; and it may be seen in the working of their improved (?) systems, whether their counsel was wise.

A spirit kindred to theirs has arisen in the present times; nay, if possible, a spirit more violent and reckless in its aspect towards our beloved Methodism. It has its origin, evidently, in disappointed ambition, and in envy of those who are superior in gifts and honour; for it first showed itself in mean and clandestine attacks on the characters and conduct of those who are thus distinguished among us. The new agitators, like their forerunners, assumed the guise of "detectors and reformers of abuses." To accomplish their object, however, they resorted to more nefarious tactics: they printed and circulated falsehoods and slanders among the Ministers without so much as the

printer's or publisher's name being attached; and this in direct violation of the English law. This un-Christian and un-English strategy having failed of its evil object,—namely, to divide the affections of the Ministers, and to undermine their fraternal confidence in each other,—the bad spirit broke forth into open hostility. Attacks on the Conference, and on its most influential and beloved members, were made in garbled Reports of its proceedings, and given in professedly “Wesleyan” newspapers. The “Banner” of the disaffected was openly unfurled, and means were organized to agitate and divide the Methodist Societies on questions previously discussed and formally settled in the Conference. “The rights and claims of the minority” were set forth, and made the subjects of controversial strife among the people.

This called for the exercise of discipline; and three Ministers, leaders in these agitating and divisive proceedings, were, on their declaration that they would not submit themselves to the laws and authority of Methodism, put away from it. By way of retaliation, the expelled have, since the last meeting of the Conference, traversed the kingdom to proclaim what they consider to be their wrongs, to excite the sympathy, and to ask the pecuniary help, of the people. Instead of fairly stating the case, they have usually indulged in invectives against the more prominent members of the Conference. Opprobrious names, selected from the vocabulary of abuse, have been employed for their purpose. The Conference has been likened to a conclave of Cardinals, the President to a Pope, and to Judge Jeffreys, the Secretary to an Inquisitor-General, and one of its members described with Satanic attributes as “the Accuser of the Brethren.” Meanwhile, they have represented themselves as “martyrs suffering for the truth.” Strange martyrs! so unwilling to sacrifice anything! They have visited town after town in almost every part of the kingdom, hawked their speeches, repeated *verbatim* their falsehoods and illustrations; and endeavoured, by every possible means, to promote jealousy and divisions in our societies. They have appealed to the very worst passions of human nature, and have tried to set the people against the Conference, the members against the Leaders, the Local Preachers against the Travelling Preachers, and the younger Ministers against the elder; and all this evil activity has been aided by an ungodly press, which, as might be expected, denounced in no measured terms the proceedings of the late Conference.

These un-Christian efforts have, in some instances, been met by the true friends and supporters of Methodism; chiefly by the issue of separate pamphlets on the general question of the expulsion of the three Ministers. Such defences have been useful, and have, doubtless, rendered good service; but to meet increased hostility, a mode of defence more vigilant and sustained seems necessary. Failing to command effective support and sympathy by the single plea of personal wrong,—the object now announced by these strenuous advocates and *martyrs for John Wesley's Methodism* is, to obtain through the