

The Destruction of Robert Alder: An Example of Transatlantic Culture and Anarchy among the Methodists

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An argument could be made that the connection between the Methodist churches in Britain and British North America was more of a curse than a blessing during the mid-nineteenth century. Some British Wesleyan ministers certainly regarded their transatlantic brethren as a colossal pain in the neck. When a seven-year long union between the British Wesleyans and the Canadian Methodists collapsed in 1840, the president of the British Wesleyan connexion bemoaned “the wretched business of Canada” that had disrupted that year’s Conference.¹ In 1846, as elements in both churches worked towards a reunion, some British Wesleyan ministers refused to have anything to do with the idea, arguing that “their connexion with the Canada Conference . . . had only been a source of trouble & injury to themselves & . . . they should keep aloof from all intercourse” with the Canadian Methodists.² A catastrophic schism in British Wesleyanism between 1849 and 1852 seemed to demonstrate that this pessimistic view of British-Canadian relations was warranted.

Though the agitation that began in 1849 was primarily the result of a number of factors indigenous to Britain, it was also connected to the existence of a subversive community of interests within North Atlantic Methodism.³ Between 1847 and 1852, a small number of British Wesleyans and Canadian Methodists came together to battle what they saw as

rampant connexional corruption on either side of the ocean. Historians of British Wesleyanism and Canadian Methodism have overlooked this sudden confluence of forces, perhaps because this section of the Methodist community shared many of the characteristics of the various radical underworlds of the nineteenth century. Like the Spencean Philanthropists in England during the early 1800s or the Hunters' Lodges in Lower and Upper Canada in 1838, Methodism's transatlantic underworld was conspiratorial by its very nature and so left little behind that might be called hard evidence.⁴ Also, most historians who have examined the interactions between British Wesleyanism and Canadian Methodism have been concerned with drawing out the conservative nature of that relationship.⁵ This article aims to provide an initial sketch of the more anarchic side of transoceanic Methodism through an examination of the role played by one British Wesleyan minister, Robert Alder, in the schism of 1849-52. More specifically, it will focus on Alder's mission to Canada East and Canada West in 1847; the scandal that arose on both sides of the Atlantic after his return to Britain; the use that discontented elements in British Wesleyanism made of that scandal; and, finally, how some Methodists in the Canadas may have directly contributed to, and attempted to profit from, the destruction of Robert Alder's career.

It is important to realize, from the beginning, that Robert Alder was not the most popular man among either the British Wesleyans or the Canadian Methodists, despite his considerable skills as a minister and a missionary administrator.⁶ By 1847 Alder had been one of the secretaries of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (the WMMS) in Britain for fourteen years.⁷ Having served in the maritime colonies and in Lower Canada during his active missionary days in the 1820s, Alder became the acknowledged British Wesleyan expert on all things North American.⁸ He also had his flaws. Among his more petty opponents, his appearance was a matter of adverse comment. In 1841 he was described as having "[l]ight hair – [a] full face" and as wearing "[a] petticoat coat, with its body like the tight stays of a female, being any thing but Methodistical."⁹ The Canadian Methodist minister John Carroll noted rather snidely that Alder "was said to have had royal blood in his veins, in a sinister way . . . his full face bore a very remarkable resemblance to that of King George IV."¹⁰ On a more serious level, Alder's personality tended to rub people the wrong way. He was a vain man, forever flaunting an honorary Doctorate of Divinity from the Wesleyan University in Middleton, Connecticut.¹¹ He

also transcribed letters in praise of himself and sent them to his fellow ministers.¹² It was not a habit calculated to endear him to his less-accomplished colleagues.

Alder's politics could also be a source of trouble. A leading Canadian Methodist minister, Egerton Ryerson, blamed Alder for the dissolution of the British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist union in 1840. Ryerson argued that Alder was an arch-reactionary, "more of a High Churchman than Wesleyan in Canadian affairs," whose conservatism had upset the fine balance that had been struck between the two connexions seven years earlier.¹³ There was some substance to Ryerson's indictment. Robert Alder was one of the main supporters of the British Wesleyan leader, Jabez Bunting. Alder, like Bunting, believed that "nothing could be more fatal to real liberty, whether in church or state" than democracy.¹⁴ Together, Bunting and Alder toiled mightily to drag Methodism away from its emotional, politically radical and populist roots towards a more dignified, politically conservative and thoroughly middle-class position in both British and colonial society.¹⁵

Despite these possible obstacles, Alder's 1847 mission to Canada East and Canada West appeared to be a complete success, initially at any rate. The WMMS dispatched him overseas "with the view of putting an end to the unhappy dissensions which [had] existed" between the Canadian Methodists and British Wesleyans since their union collapsed in 1840. In other words, he was sent to the Canadas to help organize a reunion. The WMMS had a great deal of confidence in their man, and they promised that they would "not forget the personal safety of Dr. Alder, and the success of his important embassy, in their united and earnest prayers . . ."¹⁶

Once in the Canadas, Alder faced the none-too-easy task of convincing both the Canadian Methodists and the British Wesleyan missionaries who were stationed in those colonies that a reunion was a good idea. The latter were particularly against any rapprochement with the Canadian Methodist Conference, having done their best to drive that organization into the ground since the disruption of the union in 1840.¹⁷ Despite some stiff opposition from that quarter, Alder succeeded in his mission. He talked the British Wesleyan missionaries into accepting the viability and inevitability of a reunion.¹⁸ One of those ministers, Matthew Richey, wrote to the WMMS in June 1847: "[t]he legitimate branches of our beloved Methodism," he exclaimed, "alienated for a time by causes which we could wish to obliterate forever from the tablet of memory, are

now happily and cordially *one* in the Lord . . . This is the Lord's doing and it is marvelous in our eyes." According to Richey, Alder was "entitled to the thanks not merely of our connexion, but of all who live in Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity."¹⁹ When Alder returned to Britain in August 1847, the president of the British Wesleyan Conference noted that "the brethren were very glad to see him, and were thankful for the care of God over him, for the success of his mission, and that he had been brought back in safety." The President "earnestly hoped that God would smile upon the plans adopted" in the Canadas.²⁰ The British Wesleyan Conference as a whole heard of the results of Alder's mission with "great satisfaction" and thanked God for his "safe return from his important Mission."²¹

It soon became clear, however, that Alder's success had been more apparent than real. He was in a poor way when he came before the British Wesleyan Conference in August 1847. He said that "three weeks ago, he had little expected to see the Conference. He was at that time so ill as to render it very doubtful whether, if his life were spared, he should be able to return to England for some time to come." Alder went on to give details of "some circumstances relating to his illness, and return home . . ."²² This was bad news on a strictly personal level; within a year more ominous news began to arrive from the Canadas. The senior secretary of the Canadian Methodist missionary society, Samuel Rice, wrote to Jabez Bunting in July 1848: "[t]he effect of the reports relating to Dr. Alder's conduct after he left here and what they concur to be a Breach of promise on his part in relation to . . . the removal of British ministers from Canada West – which he assured them would not take place[,] has almost destroyed many of our people." The withdrawal of the British Wesleyan missionaries had led to a year of agitation in the colony. The effect on the reunion had been dire, Rice complained, and Alder was to blame.²³ This was damaging by itself, but what did Rice mean by "Dr. Alder's conduct after he left here"?

An alarming story began to cross the ocean even before Samuel Rice wrote his letter of complaint. In September 1847, in a letter marked "Private and Confidential," Matthew Richey told Jabez Bunting that "I am aware of your having received verbal – and it is not improbable that you may also have received written – communications from persons who reside on this side of the Atlantic seriously affecting the character of one for whom . . . I have ever cherished the highest regard." This story, Richey wrote, had acquired "a most painful notoriety" in the Canadas and

threatened the “interests of our Church.” Richey warned that “unless something is done there may be an attempt to demand a formal investigation.” He suggested, as a solution, that Alder should retreat from the public stage and accept “some less prominent position” in the missionary work.²⁴ Such was the nature of Alder’s offense that the leading Methodist laity of Montreal questioned whether he was “likely to retain his office at the Mission House.” “He conducted himself so badly in Montreal,” one layman wrote, “that we were more than ashamed of him.”²⁵

The fact is that Robert Alder was publicly drunk on several occasions while he was travelling through the Canadas in 1847. Once back in Britain, the reverend doctor tried to make the case that his repeated incapacity had been the result of sickness. Writing from Canada East, the British Wesleyan missionary John Borland took Alder to task for such shabby untruths. Alder, Borland wrote, must stop shamming sickness and own up to his “long continued & immoderate use of ardent spirits . . .” “[I]nstead of a crisis in your Health being brought about by the heat of the Canadian summer etc.,” he continued, “was it not by the fearfully immoderate use of Canadian brandy?” According to Borland, the story was well known throughout British North America and “[t]he leading men of the U[pper] C[anada] Conference have talked freely of it . . .” Some laymen, he added, still resented “the stigma which your unfortunate course in 1847 brought upon that Methodism which is as dear to them, as it can be to you . . .” The only wonder, Borland concluded, was that the anti-Methodist press in Britain had not used the story to effect the mutual ruin of Alder and Methodism in general.²⁶

Unfortunately for Robert Alder and the British Wesleyan church, there was one man in Britain who was more than willing to take this story and run with it. Reverend James Everett was in many respects a thoroughly loathsome individual. Historians of British Methodism have called him an “apostle of discord,” “the stuff of which Piltdown forgers are made,” an “undistinguished” specimen “of the ministerial race,” “that most abrasive of Methodists,” and a “tangled nervous bookseller.”²⁷ Everett’s career as a Wesleyan preacher constituted one long campaign against Jabez Bunting and the denominational order that Bunting and his supporters were attempting to create.²⁸ Everett wanted Wesleyan Methodism to shake off the movement towards social respectability that it had undergone since 1791 and to return to the “pristine simplicity and power” that had characterized Methodism in the days of Wesley and the first circuit

riders.²⁹ Those apostolic men, he believed, had been replaced by men like Robert Alder – fat and complacent nonentities who were less concerned with the arduous work of saving souls than with filthy lucre or with gorging themselves on honorary doctorates from the Methodist universities and colleges of the United States.³⁰

Thoroughly disgusted with the state of Methodism, Everett broke with Bunting in the early 1820s and embarked on a private war, often waged behind a cloak of anonymity.³¹ In 1834 Everett met in secret with other ministerial malcontents in Leeds “to deliberate upon and mature a plan for the purpose of curtailing the power of the dominant party in Methodism whose arbitrary and crooked policy was becoming more and more apparent . . .”³² Nothing much came of this meeting and, in 1841, Everett published a scurrilous (and anonymous) series of sketches of his fellow ministers – the *Wesleyan Takings*. He came down hard on Bunting, describing him as “great in influence – too great to be forgiven; if he were less so, it might be borne.”³³ Over the next few years Everett became “increasingly contemptuous” of his enemy and his enemy’s many supporters, who often made up a majority within the governing structures of the British Wesleyan connexion.³⁴ That contempt, long bottled up, began to generate “a personal venom peculiar to himself” which, between 1846 and 1848, Everett poured out on his fellow ministers in a series of vicious, anonymous pamphlets known as the *Fly Sheets*.³⁵

The story of Robert Alder’s misadventures in the Canadas was grist for Everett’s mill. He attacked Alder in an effort to “show that Doctor Bunting’s whole system of government has been opposed to the advise and practice of Mr. [John] Wesley; his system being one of EXCLUSIVE-NESS, FAVOURITISM, and SELFISHNESS, as exemplified in the formation and packings of his Committees, his opposition to open, free discussion, in the general assembly . . . and his invariable attempt to confine the knowledge, the power, the privileges of the body to his own chosen few . . .”³⁶ The first *Fly Sheet* labeled Alder “the dainty Doctor” and pointed out that he seemed partial to “Head Inns” which “are not sought for quiet, cold dinners, or light suppers . . .”³⁷ This was a reference to what Everett saw as Alder’s free-spending ways while on the business of the WMMS. Everett was far more cutting in the fourth *Fly Sheet*, writing that, in 1847, Alder’s “professed illness took him some months to another place for the good of his health. It is not for us to state what influence the GOVERNOR’S *table* at Canada had upon his constitution .

...³⁸ However, equally as bad as Alder's bouts of public drunkenness was Bunting's attempt to cover for his fellow WMMS bureaucrat. According to the second *Fly Sheet*, Bunting's control over the various committees of the British Wesleyan Conference allowed his supporters to "defend and support each other on any remarks offered on their plans, propositions, and speeches." Thus, Everett charged, Alder had repeatedly managed to avoid due censure from his fellow preachers.³⁹ Various corrupt committees had protected a corrupted and corrupting minister.

Everett used the same tactics of insinuation and outright abuse to attack the rest of Bunting's supporters in the ministry.⁴⁰ Goaded almost beyond endurance for four years, Bunting and his followers proved unwilling to put up with Everett and his anonymous attacks indefinitely. In 1849 the British Wesleyan Conference was gripped by "an extraordinary mood of hysteria" as pro- and anti-Bunting ministers hurled accusations at one another and attempted, each in his own mind, to save British Wesleyanism from scandal and ruin. In the end, as so often before, the members of the pro-Bunting party formed a majority and, seizing their opportunity, they expelled Everett and two other particularly cantankerous preachers from the ministry.⁴¹ That action, however, only made matters worse.

After the Conference of 1849, Everett and his supporters made full use of the charges already levelled against Robert Alder to gain lay support and to undermine the position of the Bunting-dominated Wesleyan connexion. The agitation that followed the expulsion of Everett was the worst in the history of British Wesleyanism. Bunting and his fellow ministers attempted to drive Everett's supporters – known as the Wesleyan reformers – from church membership.⁴² This led to mob violence in Newcastle, where the minister called in the police to have the reformers removed from the chapel.⁴³ That same Newcastle minister also required a police escort to visit the unsettled West Moor circuit.⁴⁴ In Leeds, the Wesleyan reformers "resisted the making of the Chapel Fund Collection, & the person who went round with the Box, was in danger of being murdered in the place. A blow was aimed at the Local Preacher in the Pulpit."⁴⁵ The Leeds agitation was so bad that the minister declared that "the ruin of souls is fearful . . ."⁴⁶ At a missionary meeting in London, just as the agitation was gathering force, the Wesleyan reformers tried to pack the room and succeeded in heaping abuse on the connexional hierarchy. At one point, one of the agitators "blurted out some of the reports about Dr.

Alder.”⁴⁷ At a public meeting in London, in October 1849, one of Everett’s supporters asked rhetorically whether Alder remembered “any inquiry before the chairman of the New Brunswick District relative to the conduct of a passenger from Canada to Halifax, N.S.?” He also asked “[d]oes the Doctor recollect any remarkable occurrence as he travelled through Canada” and “[d]oes the Doctor know a gentleman who is in the habit of frequenting a tavern called the Queen’s Head, Pitfield-street, Hoxton . . .”; that is, at a tavern very near the headquarters of the WMMS.⁴⁸

All of this, combined with a variety of other tactics, was very successful from James Everett’s point of view. The *Fly Sheets* agitation led, by 1852, to the loss of 22.6% of the membership of the British Wesleyan connexion.⁴⁹ In that year, too, the growing scandal around Alder’s personal problems led to his resignation from the British Wesleyan ministry. A year earlier, despite the continued support of Jabez Bunting, Alder had been forced out of the WMMS.⁵⁰ Canada turned out to be a wretched business indeed for Robert Alder.

And various Methodists in Canada East and Canada West may have played a direct role in destroying Alder’s career. Someone, or some group, seems to have been sending Everett and his fellow hell-raisers propaganda material from the Canadas. In making his case against Alder and the British Wesleyan Conference, Everett wrote about the “opinions and reports of the Canadians on the subject” of Alder’s scandalous behaviour in 1847.⁵¹ Everett also mentioned “evidence . . . direct from Canada” and claimed to have received letters from Montreal, Hamilton and Toronto.⁵² This statement was calculated, of course, to suggest that there were those in the Canadas who supported the actions of the Wesleyan reformers in Britain. Undoubtedly, however, the vast majority of the Methodists in Canada East and Canada West stood solidly behind Bunting and his colleagues during the crisis of 1849-52. While the British Conference of 1849 was still in session Matthew Richey urged the Buntingites to clip the wings of the *Fly Sheets*, leaving them besmeared “with the serpent’s food – fit retribution for doing the serpent’s work.”⁵³ As the agitation in Britain gathered steam, many British Wesleyan missionaries and laymen in Canada East also wrote home, sympathizing with “our Fathers & Brethren . . . at this particularly trying time” and praying that God might “support His dear servants and sanctify this painful matter to the good of [H]is Church and the glory of His holy name . . .”⁵⁴ At their conference in 1851, the Canadian Methodists in Canada West followed suit, expressing their

support for the Bunting and his allies, begging to assure them that the conflicts wracking the home connexion “only increase our approval of your principles and proceedings.” “The constitution which was received from the Rev. John Wesley,” the Canadian Methodist ministers added, “and faithfully transmitted to you and to us, is a sacred and an invaluable trust, which . . . will not be resigned at the bidding of any power, much less at the dictation of a mistaken, unscriptural, and violent confederation.”⁵⁵

Yet, despite such ringing messages of transatlantic solidarity, there were also indications of the existence of a subversive element within Methodism in Canada East and Canada West whose growth did parallel the development of Wesleyan reform in Britain, just as Everett suggested. From the official correspondence of the WMMS, it appears that Montreal was the epicentre of this colonial discontent. In 1850, a newspaper, significantly entitled the *Wesleyan Reformer*, was floated in the city. It aimed “to bring to light the abuses and to correct the evils of Methodism” and it was supposed to be a copy of the anti-Bunting and pro-Everett *Wesleyan Times* in Britain.⁵⁶ Two years later, again in Montreal, a British Wesleyan missionary wrote that “I regard it to be my duty to state . . . that there is a large amount of sympathy among the official members of this Circuit with the troublers of our Israel. In so far as my knowledge extends there is not one of our Leaders, but is somewhat tinctured with disaffection to the Conference; based as they say on the non-interference of Conference in respect to certain occurrences here” during Alder’s time in Canada.⁵⁷ Agitation in the home country was linked to agitation in the colonies. The Montreal laity was every bit as angered as Everett by the support that Bunting and other members of the British Wesleyan Conference had given to Alder after his return from the Canadas in 1847.

The situation was no better in Canada West. There were also Methodists in that colony that shared the grievances of the Wesleyan reformers in Britain. As early as 1842, one Canadian Methodist minister, Matthew Holtby, wrote to Egerton Ryerson about his fear that “primitive, old-fashioned Methodism” was “on the decline in England.” Using language that would have been familiar to James Everett, Holtby lamented that the zeal of the British Wesleyan preachers of old was being “murdered by *Degrees*,” whether “A.M.D. or D.D. or even LL.D. with F.A.S. at the end of it . . .” He was afraid that “what *has taken* place in England *may take place* in Canada.”⁵⁸ Holtby was not alone: when the *Fly Sheets* agitation broke out in Britain, some discounted elements in Canadian

Methodism attempted to make common cause with the troubles of the connexional waters in the Old Country. In November 1850, the superintendent of the Methodist missions in Canada West, Enoch Wood, noted that that colony was “not altogether free from the company of sympathizers” with the agitators in Britain. The pro-Everett *Wesleyan Times* was regularly “sent among our people in different parts of this country . . .”⁵⁹ After visiting Hamilton in 1851, Wood reported that “[s]ome of us [in the ministry] came in for a good share of abuse by persons who sympathize with Everett & Co.”⁶⁰ A month later, he noted that “a Canadian fly-sheet writer” had described the “sympathy said to exist here with the ‘Reformers’ . . .”⁶¹ Wood vigorously denied that such sympathy existed, but his own letters suggested otherwise.

This point was driven home in the pages of the colonial press. Not surprisingly, George Sanderson, the editor of the *Christian Guardian*, the official organ of the Canadian Methodist church, came out swinging against Everett and the Wesleyan reformers. “Sympathy for the offenders,” he declared in September 1849, “would prompt us to wish for clemency in their case,” but an even greater sympathy for transatlantic Methodism compelled him “to demand the punishment of offenders against the peace, the spirit, the usage, and even the written law of Methodism.”⁶² Methodists in Britain and the Canadas, Sanderson argued a month later, did not need or want “successive changes in the system by which they have been so much blessed.”⁶³ However, between 1849 and 1852, Sanderson felt the need to defend the Buntingites’ actions against attacks launched by other newspapers in Canada West. Over and over again, he noted in April 1850, “[p]arties . . . hostile to the interests of the Wesleyan Church” had seized on the agitation in Britain in an effort “to awaken sympathy in behalf of the expelled.”⁶⁴ The Hamilton *Provincialist*, for instance, made several attempts to “kindle the flame of Wesleyan revolution” in Canada West during early 1850. At one point, the *Provincialist* printed a letter from “An Old Wesleyan” denouncing the *Christian Guardian* as “a sickening specimen of cant and hypocrisy” for presuming to downplay the “the present religious commotion” within British Wesleyanism.⁶⁵ This effort, Sanderson admitted, may have elicited a response from some Methodists in the Canadas, but, he was careful to add, not to the “extent of croaking, much less of conspiring, but only to the degree of appearing suspicious and looking sour; a state of disease still quite curable by proper applications.”⁶⁶

The disease, however, remained stubbornly resistant to any cure

whatsoever. The slow and painful destruction of Robert Alder's career, and the Wesleyan reform agitation that accompanied it, was simply too handy a weapon in the hands of anyone who might have had a grudge against the leadership of either the British Wesleyan or the Canadian Methodist connexion. In October 1850, the Toronto *Examiner* – a newspaper with a history of attacking the Canadian Methodist church and its connection to British Wesleyanism – printed a scathing letter from “A Wesleyan Minister.” The anonymous writer assailed the British Wesleyan church for its continued support of Robert Alder, a minister whose “fame as a lover of thick wine and thin brandy, is known over the whole world of Methodism.” That Egerton Ryerson wrote to the British Wesleyan Conference declaring “that his heart was one with them,” even though he knew about “the grave charges” against Alder, only served to demonstrate that Canadian Methodism had become as corrupt as the connexion in the home country. “Alas! Alas!” the ‘Wesleyan Minister’ wrote, “to what a depth of depravity and hypocrisy man can sink.”⁶⁷ Eleven years later, even people friendly to the Canadian Methodists and British Wesleyans were of the same opinion. Henry Cox, a circuit rider in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States, told a visiting British Wesleyan minister “his version of the charges against Dr. A[lder] from Canada etc. etc. and accused Dr. R[yerson] . . . and others of screening him to the great injury of our work and characters there.”⁶⁸ As is often the case, it took an outside observer to point out what should have been obvious to everyone involved: the connection between the Methodist churches in Britain and British North America was, in fact, more of a curse than a blessing during the mid-nineteenth century.

In a 2002 article, Andrew Porter urged historians not to take the concept of the “Atlantic World” or “Atlantic System” for granted. This perspective, Porter wrote, must be examined and reexamined since “by the 1830s, transatlantic and European continental connections amongst those engaged in spreading Christianity overseas . . . proved themselves to be of considerable significance.”⁶⁹ Having made that statement, Porter went on to argue that the Atlantic World (or System) was a great force for uniting all Protestant denominations in a common feeling of mission to redeem the world.⁷⁰ There is certainly a great deal to be said for this reading. However, as this article has attempted to demonstrate, the connections between centre and periphery could also lead to a great deal of disunity both at home and abroad for the nineteenth-century churches. This is not to say,

of course, that groups like the Wesleyan reformers in Britain and their sympathizers in British North America were ever more than a minority. Yet, the fact remains that they existed, they shared a common outlook on certain issues, they seem to have communicated with one another, and, for a brief time in the 1840s and early 1850s, they had a disruptive impact on the British Wesleyan and Canadian Methodist churches. Such discontented minority groups need to be investigated in greater detail in order to help us towards a more complex understanding of the transatlantic, evangelical culture that linked metropole and colony in the nineteenth century.

Endnotes

1. Letter, Joseph Taylor to Joseph Entwisle, 1 September 1840, MAM PLP 105.6.37, Joseph Taylor papers, Methodist Archives and Research Centre, John Rylands University Library of Manchester, Manchester (hereafter MARC).
2. Letter, John Ryerson to Egerton Ryerson, 1 August 1846, Box 3, File 74, Egerton Ryerson papers, United Church Archives, Toronto, ON (hereafter UCA).
3. Compare with Michael Watts, *The Dissenters: The Expansion of Evangelical Nonconformity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 614-22. Though Watts, like other historians of British Wesleyanism, discusses the role of the Irish-American revivalist James Caughey in the schism of 1849-52, he does not examine other transatlantic factors.
4. Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries, and Pornographers in London, 1795-1840* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 1-112; Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 338-51.
5. Goldwin French, *Parsons and Politics: The role of the Wesleyan Methodists in Upper Canada and the Maritimes from 1780 to 1855* (Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1962), throughout; and Neil Semple, *The Lord's Dominion: The History of Canadian Methodism* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1996), 71-99.
6. On Alder's involvement with Canada see Goldwin French, "Robert Alder," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1967-), 10:3-5; and Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 81-3, 93-7.

7. G.G. Findlay and W.W. Holdsworth, *The History of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society* (London: Epworth Press, 1921), 1:108.
8. French, "Robert Alder," 10:4.
9. James Everett, *Wesleyan Takings: or Centenary Sketches of Ministerial Character, as Exhibited in the Wesleyan Connexion, during the First Hundred Years of its Existence* (London: Hamilton, Adams, and Co., 1841), 309-10.
10. John Carroll, *Case and His Cotemporaries: or, the Canadian Itinerants' Memorial* (Toronto: Samuel Rose, 1867-77), 3:88.
11. Everett, *Wesleyan Takings*, 310.
12. See, for example, Letter, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting, 9 September 1839, MAM PLP 1.36.8, Robert Alder papers, MARC; Letter, Robert Alder to an unknown correspondent, 5 June 1820, MAM PLP 1.36.24, Robert Alder papers, MARC.
13. Egerton Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism: Its Epochs and Characteristics* (Toronto: William Briggs, 1882), 296, 303, 308.
14. Letter, Jabez Bunting to William Beal, 10 May 1821 in W.R. Ward, ed., *The Early Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1820-1829* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1972), 74. For Alder's political views see French, "Robert Alder," 10:4; and Semple, *Lord's Dominion*, 79; *Watchman*, 23 October 1839, 355.
15. Letter, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting, 18 November 1841, MAM PLP 1.36.10, Robert Alder papers, MARC; Letter, Robert Alder to Jabez Bunting, 29 August 1849, in W.R. Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism: The Correspondence of Jabez Bunting, 1830-1858* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 380.
16. Minutes of the General Committee of the Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society (hereafter WMMS), 10 March 1847, Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society Correspondence (hereafter WMMS-C), UCA. See also French, *Parsons and Politics*, 251-4.
17. See, for example, Letter, Members of the London circuit to the Chairman and Ministers of Western Canada, Wesleyan Missionary District in special District Meeting assembled, 6 February 1847, Box 31, File 224, # 31, WMMS-C, UCA; Letter, William Martin Harvard to Robert Alder, 17 February 1847, Box 31, File 224, #34, WMMS-C, UCA; Letter, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, 22 February 1847, Box 31, File 224, #4, WMMS-C, UCA; Letter,

- Ephraim Evans to Robert Alder, 19 March 1847, Box 31, File 224, #36, WMMS-C, UCA.
18. Memorandum by Enoch Wood, 26 May 1847, Reel 5, District Minutes (Canada/Upper Canada), WMMS-C, UCA. For the reaction of the British Wesleyan missionaries in Canada East to Alder's mission see 8 May 1847, Reel 3, District Minutes (Canada/ Lower Canada), WMMS-C, UCA.
 19. Letter, Matthew Richey to Dr. Bennett, 12 June 1847, MAM PLP 86.21.2, Matthew Richey papers, MARC. Emphasis in original.
 20. *Watchman*, 18 August 1847, 393.
 21. British Conference Journal, 1830, 830, NUG Shelf 364a, MARC.
 22. *Watchman*, 18 August 1847, 393.
 23. Letter, Samuel D. Rice to Jabez Bunting, 13 July 1848, MAW MS 45, John P. Lockwood collection, MARC.
 24. Letter, Matthew Richey to Jabez Bunting, 13 September 1847, MAW MS 45, John P. Lockwood collection, MARC.
 25. Letter, William Lunn to John Mathewson [?], 20 January 1848, Box 29, File 226, #3, WMMS-C, UCA.
 26. Letter, John Borland to Robert Alder, 13 December 1850, MAM PLP 10.37.2, John Borland papers, MARC.
 27. John Kent, "The Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," in *A History of the Methodist Church in Great Britain*, ed. Rupert Davies et al. (London: Epworth Press, 1978), 2:223; John Kent, *Jabez Bunting, The Last Wesleyan: A study in the Methodist Ministry after the Death of John Wesley* (London: Epworth Press, 1955), 56; W.R. Ward, *Religion and Society in England, 1790-1850* (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1972), 264; Richard Heitzenrater and W.R. Ward, eds., *The Works of John Wesley: Journal and Diaries* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991), 20:309 n. 72; Owen Chadwick, *The Victorian Church, Part I*, 3rd. ed. (London: Adam and Charles Black Ltd., 1971), 380. Contemporaries could be equally unforgiving. One of them described Everett as "[t]he mole of Methodism working underground" (see 25 October 1863, Journal of George H. Harwood, Nottingham Record Office; quoted in Rowland C. Swift, *Lively People: Methodism in Nottingham, 1740-1979* [Nottingham: Department of Adult Education, University of Nottingham, 1982], 96).
 28. Ward, *Religion and Society*, 264. See also Kent, "Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," 2:259 n. 74 on Everett's more personal grudge against Jabez Bunting.

29. Richard Chew, *James Everett: A Biography* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875), 296.
30. Watts, *Dissenters*, 618-20. See also Letter, James Everett to Samuel Broadbent, 8 April 1840, MAM PLP 38.52.9, James Everett papers, MARC.
31. Letter, James Everett to Samuel Broadbent, 10 November 1841, MAM PLP 38.52.10, James Everett papers, MARC; Robert Currie, *Methodism Divided: A Study in the Sociology of Ecumenicalism* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1968), 68; and Watts, *Dissenters*, 620.
32. 14 May 1834, Volume 3, MS Memorandum Book of James Everett, MARC; quoted in Ward, ed., *Early Victorian Methodism*, 102, n. 4; D.A. Gowland, *Methodist Secessions: The origins of Free Methodism in three Lancashire towns: Manchester, Rochdale, Liverpool* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1979), 38-9.
33. Everett, *Wesleyan Takings*, 6.
34. Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 65.
35. Ward, *Religion and Society*, 264. Everett's authorship of the *Fly Sheets* has never been categorically proven, but their style and content point most directly to him. See Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 68-9; Kent, "Wesleyan Methodists to 1849," 2:234, n. 39; Watts, *Dissenters*, 618. Oliver Beckerlegge makes an entirely convincing argument for Everett's authorship in *The Three Expelled, James Everett, Samuel Dunn, William Griffith* (Peterborough: Foundry Press, 1996), 12.
36. [James Everett], *All the Numbers of the 'Fly Sheets' Now First Reprinted in One Pamphlet* (Birmingham: William Cornish, 1850), 1-2.
37. [Everett], *Fly Sheets*, 7-8.
38. James Everett, 'Methodism As It Is.' *With some of its antecedents; including a diary of the campaign of 1849* (London: W. Reed, 1863-65), 1:341. Emphasis in original.
39. [Everett], *Fly Sheets*, 43. Everett elaborated on this charge, in regard to Alder's activities in Canada in 1847, in 'Methodism As It Is,' 2:901-4, 905-6, 917. The third *Fly Sheet* specifically mentions Alder's "Canada case" – a reference to charges brought against the reverend doctor for supposedly misleading the British Wesleyan Conference about the success of his earlier mission to Canada in 1839 (see Ryerson, *Canadian Methodism*, 319-20).

40. See, for example, the excoriating comparison of Bunting's words and actions in [Everett], *Fly Sheets*, 1-3.
41. Benjamin Gregory, *Side Lights on the Conflicts of Methodism* (London: Cassell and Company Ltd., 1898), 444-60; John Kent, *Age of Disunity* (London: Epworth Press, 1966), 119; and Watts, *Dissenters*, 620-2.
42. On the course of the agitation see Currie, *Methodism Divided*, 71-6; Ward, *Religion and Society*, 268-72; and Watts, *Dissenters*, 621-5.
43. Letter, William Burt to John Beecham, 25 September 1850, MAM PLP 21.13.5, William Burt papers, MARC.
44. Letter, William Burt to John Beecham, 11 December 1850, MAM PLP 21.13.7, William Burt papers, MARC.
45. Letter, William Lord to unknown correspondent, 18 February 1851, MAM PLP 70.33.5, William Lord papers, MARC.
46. Letter, William Lord to unknown correspondent, 9 April 1851, MAM PLP 70.33.6, William Lord Papers, MARC.
47. Letter, Elijah Hoole to Jabez Bunting, 13 October 1849, MAM PLP 55.32.54, Elijah Hoole papers, MARC.
48. Everett, *'Methodism As It Is,'* 2:236.
49. Watts, *Dissenters*, 621. Many of the laymen and women who left the British Wesleyan Church either abandoned Methodism altogether or eventually made their way into the United Methodist Free Church – the embodiment, more or less, of James Everett's reforming ideals.
50. Everett, *'Methodism As It Is,'* 2:905-6, 916; cf. French, "Robert Alder," 10:5.
51. Everett, *'Methodism As It Is,'* 1:341.
52. Everett, *'Methodism As It Is,'* 2:810-11.
53. Letter, Matthew Richey to Robert Alder, 12 July 1849, Box 33, File 242, #17, WMMS-C, UCA.
54. Letter, Matthew Lang to Elijah Hoole, 1 October 1849, Box 33, File 235, #15, WMMS-C, UCA. See also Letter, John Jenkins to Robert Alder, 21 December 1849, Box 33, File 235, #22, WMMS-C, UCA; Letter, James Ferrier to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, 8 February 1851, Box 35, File 252, #2, WMMS-C, UCA.

55. *Minutes of Twelve Annual Conferences of the Wesleyan Methodist Church in Canada, from 1846 to 1857 inclusive* (Toronto: Anson Green, 1863), 174.
56. Letter, John Jenkins to Robert Alder, 30 March 1850, Box 34, File 243, #6, WMMS-C, UCA.
57. Letter, William Squire to the General Secretaries of the WMMS, 2 January 1852, Box 36, File 260, #4, WMMS-C, UCA.
58. Letter, Matthew Holtby to Egerton Ryerson, 15 March 1842, Egerton Ryerson papers, Library and Archives of Canada (hereafter LAC). Emphasis in original.
59. Letter, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, 14 November 1850, Box 34, File 250, #12, WMMS-C, UCA.
60. Letter, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, 10 November 1851, Box 36, File 259, #9, WMMS-C, UCA.
61. Letter, Enoch Wood to Elijah Hoole, 10 December 1851, Box 36, File 259, #11, WMMS-C, UCA.
62. *Christian Guardian*, 12 September 1849, 186.
63. *Christian Guardian*, 31 October 1849, 214.
64. *Christian Guardian*, 17 April 1850, 304.
65. *Christian Guardian*, 3 April 1850, 296; 8 May 1850, 316.
66. *Christian Guardian*, 8 May 1850, 316.
67. *Examiner*, 28 October 1850. See also *Examiner*, 26 May 1847; 9 June, 1847; 28 July, 1847.
68. 9 August 1861, Journal, William Billington Boyce papers, LAC.
69. Andrew Porter, "Church History, History of Christianity, Religious History: Some Reflections on British Missionary Enterprise Since the Late Eighteenth Century," *Church History* 71, no. 3 (2002): 568-9.
70. Porter, "Church History," 574-5.

