

REV. W. THOM



BORN, ABERDEEN, SEPT.,
1751.
CALLED TO THE MINISTRY,
1774.
APPOINTED ONE OF THE
LEGAL HUNDRED, 1784.
PRESIDENT OF FIRST
M. N. C. CONFERENCE,
1797.
APPOINTED EDITOR AND
BOOK STEWARD, 1803.
DIED, LONGTON, DEC.,
1811.

REV. A. KILHAM



BORN, EPWORTH, JULY, 1762.
CALLED TO THE MINISTRY,
1785.
ISSUED PAMPHLET, "PRO-
GRESS OF LIBERTY," 1795.
EXPULSED FROM WESLEYAN
METHODISTS, 1796,
SECRETARY OF FIRST M. N. C.
CONFERENCE, 1797.
DIED, NOTTINGHAM, DEC.,
1798.



THE
CENTENARY
OF THE
METHODIST
NEW
CONNEXION
1797=1897

By

Revs. T. D. Crothers, D.D., T. Rider,
W. Longbottom, W. J. Townsend, D.D.

Editor—

Rev. G. PACKER

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30, FURNIVAL ST.,
HOLBORN, E.C.

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PREFACE

THAT so significant an occasion as the Connexional Centenary should be worthily commemorated is a general desire ; and the issue of this volume is one of the many ways in which an important historic event will be marked. It was the wish of the Conference that the Rev. S. Hulme, the only survivor of the writers of the Jubilee Volume, should write one of these chapters, but Mr. Hulme respectfully declined on the ground of his advanced age. The four brethren selected for the work have acquitted themselves admirably, and the result is, it is believed, a contribution to the Connexional literature of permanent value. They have written independently of each other, and each, of course, is responsible for his own part only. Necessarily with four different writers there will be variety in the opinions expressed, but such variety as may be found here does not extend to any fundamental principle.

Indeed, it is worthy of note that in all the developments of a century, there has been no serious endeavour to reverse any of the essential proposals of our founders, and it is no mean testimony to their sagacity and foresight that the principles they laid down rule us to-day, and are received with approval throughout the community. Their anxiety for enlarged usefulness in preaching the gospel to a perishing world led them to abandon the equivocal position, which Methodists until then occupied, of auxiliary and irregular forces hanging on to the Establishment without being recognised by it. In organising themselves as a Christian Church they declared

for what are called the "Crown rights" of our Lord, and acknowledged no other Headship whatever ; and they adopted a polity Connexional in its scope, that the strong might help the weak, and free in all its appointments and offices, as became men who believed in the common priesthood of all believers, and who accepted the word, "One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren."

It is a fact worth chronicling that for a hundred years the wheels of our Church machinery have run without friction. The Word of God has been faithfully preached, the sacraments duly observed, godly discipline maintained, and the just rights of all Church officers and members, of ministry and laity, fully recognised and asserted. We have adhered to all that is essential in the constitution of a century ago, and at the same time the Connexion has developed according to the needs of the changing years. And now, as we review the manner in which our Church has gradually perfected its methods of work, and evolved its diversified agencies for the spread of the gospel, while we would shun all boasting and vain-glory, there is little need to speak of the Connexion with "bated breath or whispering humbleness."

Our chapels and schools are commodious and convenient, and in their aggregate cost represent a sum that speaks eloquently for the generosity of our people. Illustrations of some of them are given from the various Districts, and many others not less important, and with equal claim for notice, might have been added. Selection was difficult and yet compulsory, and the Executive Committee have given representative chapels from all parts of the Connexion. No description has been found possible owing to limited space ; they are simply given as illustrative of the valuable property the Connexion owns. Description perhaps is not needed, for what is called the "domestic feeling" is a marked feature with us, and leads to so general an acquaintance with all parts of the Connexion, that most readers of this volume will probably have a fairly accurate idea of the cost and the accommodation of the chapels represented.

Selection was also compulsory in giving portraits of leading ministers and laymen ; and, while many more might easily have been chosen, the exigencies of space afforded little

option to the Committee. With the exception of several still with us, given for reasons that will be obvious, the portraits are of brethren who after faithful service have passed to their reward.

We raise in our Centenary Commemoration a grateful memorial to God, even as the pious Hebrews instituted enduring reminders of significant crises in their history. But we shun all exclusiveness in our praise. In every expression of gratitude for a gracious Providence that has never forgotten us, in every song of thanksgiving that rises to Him who has been our unfailing Guide, we offer adoration also for blessings that have fallen at the same time on the other tribes of Israel. Our fleece has not been wet while that of others has remained dry; our fields have not been fruitful while others have remained a barren waste. We rejoice in common mercies; in gracious visitations that have been as impartial as the sunshine; and if the Lord has added innumerable precious souls to our fellowship, He has not less added to the fellowship of other Churches, and the joy of one is the joy of all.

It is a fact significant, it is hoped, of future experience, that in this the Centenary year, we have an increase of over a thousand persons as Church members, or members on trial. This should be an inspiration to fuller service and completer devotion. We are thankful for the past, but we cannot rest satisfied with what has been already accomplished. What is noblest and best in the past we will regard as the sure pledge and unfailing prophecy of greater victories in the future now opening upon us. Showers have fallen on the thirsty land; but our faith regards them as only prelude of the abundant rain that shall make the solitary place glad, and transform the wilderness into the garden of the Lord.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "George Paeder." The signature is written in a cursive style with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

June, 1897.

THE CHURCH PRINCIPLES AND ORDER OF THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION

REV W J. TOWNSEND, D.D.

CHAPTER I

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

THE Lord Jesus Christ in the fulfilment of His great redeeming work established a kingdom of peace and righteousness among men. It was designed to become universal, but it could only become so by the voluntary acceptance of its principles by each separate member of the race. This could only be accomplished in proportion as the laws and principles of the kingdom were propagated throughout the world. Conviction of the truth of Christ's claims and the rightfulness of His authority must be a matter of growth, the rate of which must be regulated by the favourableness or otherwise of the circumstances by which it is attended. The forces of evil with supernatural skill, malignity and resource, exhaust all their arts to counteract the truth, to mislead erring minds, and to defeat the agents of Christ upon every field. The great purpose of the Lord Jesus was one therefore which involved the exercise of infinite patience, wisdom, and determination before the rebel spirit could be cast down and victory achieved on the side of eternal righteousness.

The operative and administrative agent of this Divine

kingdom is the Holy Ghost, of whom Christ said : " And He, when He is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgement " (John xvi. 8). Through His efficient agency men were to be won from the practise of evil, to faith in Jesus, from wilful rebellion, to obedience and loyalty to God.

But during the formation of the kingdom it was required upon many grounds that the institution known as the Church should be established. Men who had realised the saving and sanctifying power of Christ needed a uniting bond and opportunity for helpful fellowship. The Holy Spirit, who operates in and through those who have been consecrated by His grace, needed a sphere for His ministrations and an organisation wherein His work could be conserved. All this has been provided in the Church, which during the course of the ages has been the Divinely appointed witness of Christ in the world, the home and training-school of His people, the instrumentality by which the gospel has been diffused among the nations, and the living organism by which the Spirit has demonstrated and vindicated the power of the name of Jesus.

The Church of Christ was virtually established in the declaration which He made to Peter : " I will build My Church " (Matt. xvi. 18). The preparatory steps were taken during His ministry, as He trained the Twelve to become the apostles of His will. It was formally consecrated by the sublime intercessory prayer offered by Christ on the evening previous to His crucifixion (John xvii.). Divine equipment was given to the apostles and expansion to the institution by the baptism of power on the day of Pentecost (Acts ii.). Since that time the Church has been marred by the infirmity and unfaithfulness of many of its officers and members, and thus its progress has been impeded and its influence diminished. But with all these drawbacks it has been a bond of unity among the most diverse temperaments and various characters ; it has been a perennial fountain of virtue, philanthropy, and heroism ; the noblest qualities of manhood have been educed beneath its fostering care ; it has been an impregnable breakwater against the flood tides of evil ; it

has been the efficient propagandist of every doctrine or precept that could enlighten or elevate human nature ; and it has been the source and centre of regenerative agencies wherever it has found an abiding-place.

The ideal Church, the Church of Divine institution, uncorrupted by human pride or weakness, is to be found portrayed in the New Testament. There alone is presented the model shaped by the Spirit of Christ and the apostles. The Church of the early centuries comes to us with no seal of Divine authority except where it has not diverged from primitive simplicity and truth. Still less of holy impress or of enshrined truth is to be traced in the great spiritual despotism reared by the Papacy, and which dominated the mind of Europe during the Middle Ages. Therefore, in the consideration of the constitution or polity of the Church of the Lord Jesus, the appeal must be made to the records of the New Testament, which alone are decisive upon the subject.

The Church is constituted of all believers in the Lord Jesus. The address of Paul to the Corinthians may be taken as designating the whole body or Church : "Them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints, with all that call upon the name of our Lord Jesus Christ in every place, their Lord and ours" (1 Cor. i. 2). The conditions of admission into its membership are tersely given (Acts xx. 21), "Repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ." The condition of prolonged enjoyment of its fellowship is "patience in well-doing," and "seeking for glory, honour, incorruption, and eternal life" (Rom. ii. 7).

Believers still upon the earth, and who are united in the fellowship of the gospel, constitute the visible Church. But there is also the invisible Church, which includes all who have been gathered out of the world from every age, people, and language, the innumerable majority of saintly souls who have passed behind the veil, and now "see the King in His beauty in the far-reaching land." These are still in communion with believers who are in the Church below, and altogether form one body with Christ as its glorified Head. So Charles Wesley sings in his sweetest song :—

“ One family we dwell in Him,
 One Church above, beneath ;
 Though now divided by the stream,
 The narrow stream of death.

•
 One army of the living God,
 At His command we bow ;
 Part of the host has crossed the flood,
 And part is crossing now.”

There are several broad, distinguishing characteristics belonging to the visible Church which to observe here will save misunderstanding afterwards.

(a) Spirituality. “ My kingdom,” said Christ, “ is not of this world ” (John xviii. 36). By this was meant, that it was not based on material power nor established by force ; it was unattended by outward show or demonstration ; its purpose was in direct contrast to that of the great world powers of the age ; its laws were of a higher order and appealed to nobler motives. Christ aimed at spiritual and not secular dominion ; His discipline and penalties were moral and ameliorative ; the insignia of His rule were not with observation (Luke xvii. 20, 21). Any interference with the Church by the temporal power is therefore an infraction of the crown rights of the King, and must be resisted by His subjects. On the other hand, any attempt on the part of the visible Church, or a portion of it, to exercise secular power, to use other force than moral suasion, to maintain an earthly government and wield carnal weapons, is to depart from the simplicity of Christ and to forfeit the presence and glory of the Holy Ghost.

(b) Unity. There is only one Church of Christ, although it is composed of many congregations or denominations, which, by custom or for convenience, are called Churches. It is, however, but one, as all its branches run up into one living Vine, or, to use the apostolic figure, its members are one body in Christ. There is but one animating presence, one guiding, controlling influence throughout all the parts, and thus “ all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the

body unto the building up of itself in love" (Eph. iv. 16). The oneness of all believers consists in being united upon certain fundamental doctrines and sacraments. There is "one Lord," Jesus Christ Himself, All and in All; "one faith," not a creed, but a common looking unto and trusting in Jesus for eternal salvation; "one baptism," one simple initiatory rite which symbolises the sanctifying grace of the indwelling Spirit; "one God and Father of all," absolute Sovereign, Fountain of Life, who "spreads undivided, operates unspent," who "is over all and through all and in you all" (Eph. iv. 5, 6). Differences on minor points may well be tolerated where there is agreement on the fundamentals. The Head has said: "One is your Master even Christ, and all ye are brethren" (Matt. xxiii. 8). This deep spiritual underlying oneness is not the full embodiment of the Saviour's ideal of His Church. There is a visible and organic oneness which must be realised before the priestly intercession offered beneath the shadow of Calvary is fulfilled: "That they may be one, even as we are one; I in them and Thou in Me, that they may be perfected into one, that the world may know that Thou didst send Me" (John xvii. 23). When this blissful consummation shall be realised, and the scattered saints shall be "perfected into one," He only knows who hath set the times and seasons within His own authority; but whatever tends towards this end must have the special benediction of the Master upon it, and grave indeed is the sin of those who would cause or perpetuate needlessly divisions in the Body of the Lord.

(c) Catholicity. The universality of the Church is affirmed in all the Christian creeds. The early Fathers believed that the Church extended throughout the whole world, if not in fact, yet in the mind and purpose of its Founder. The Church is Catholic or universal in the sense of being all-inclusive. It is free from all local colouring, or racial partialities. It is equally adapted to all tribes and nations, to all climates and civilisations. It gathers into its capacious bosom all congregations of believers, and is the peaceful home of meek and holy men the world over. For any one denomination of Christians to claim an exclusive title to the

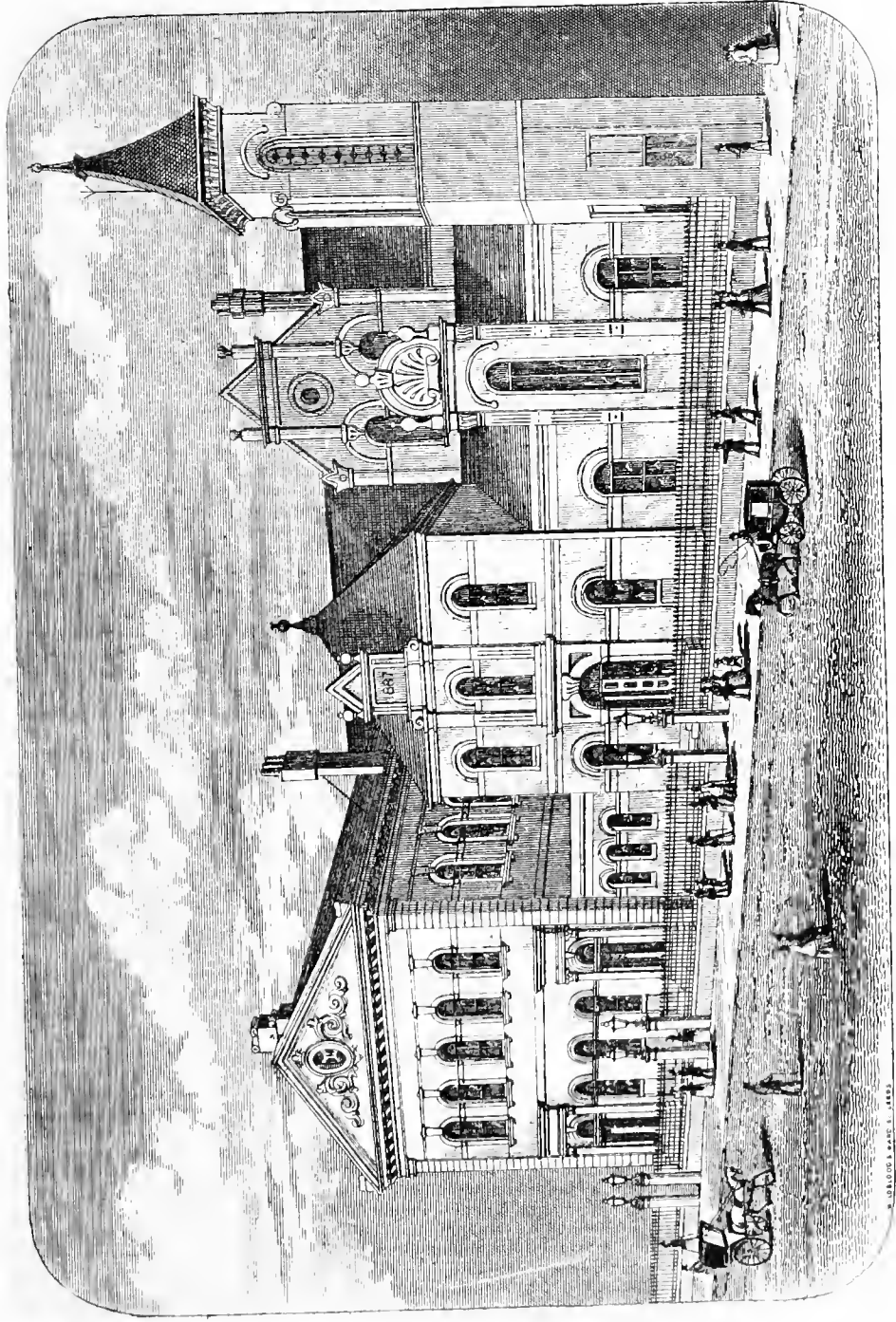
name Catholic is to commit an offence against Divine charity and to breathe the spirit of bigotry and intolerance.

The many denominations within the universal Church each represent or emphasise in their separate state some doctrinal tenet or Church principle which has been overlooked or denied by other denominations. That such might have adequate expression many sects have arisen in the past. But such minor divisions are not excluded from the Catholic Church by reason of minor differences. Many of the smallest bodies have manifested undying loyalty to Christ, in affirming His Headship and bearing reproach for His sake.

Whilst the term Church is used in Scripture in relation to the larger brotherhood of saints which constitutes the Universal Church, it is also frequently used of separate or local communities, as "The Church of God which is at Corinth" (2 Cor. i. 2), with many similar passages. But in whichever relation used it signifies the whole body of the people in fellowship. The body of elders, or the bishop, or the overseer are never called the Church. The officers or administrators are not the Church, nor does it exist for them. They exist only for and through the Church. Such is the teaching of Paul: "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops, to feed the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). The Church is composed of units, each of whom has a well-defined position, with rights, privileges, and opportunities of service consequent thereon.

The primitive Church was not at first perfect either in knowledge of Divine doctrine, expertness of administration, or equipment for service. But it was presided over by a band of men who had been first trained by the Lord Himself, and then filled with the Holy Ghost according to the promise of Christ (John xiv. 16, 17, 26, &c.). Thus in holding a special and temporary office of unique importance they were specially endowed with Divine wisdom, gifts of healing, and administrative skill.

This Church, as to rudimentary and fundamental principles, must set the model for all Churches. Indeed, all Churches throughout the Christian centuries which have humbly sought



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to embody the mind of Christ, have looked to it as the standard and rule by which all essential principles or arrangements must be measured or regulated. Even as to non-essentials it is imperative that they should be harmonious or symmetrical with the guiding lines drawn by the apostles. Whatever is opposed to these is not of God.

To answer the purposes of its being and fulfil its mission the Church required organisation. It is a shallow fashion of this age to flout at "organised Christianity," as though it could preserve any perpetuity without organisation. All high and efficient life is organised, and the fuller the life the more perfect the organisation. The one is the measure of the other. It is when the organisation of the Church is kept efficient that its life flows most freely and its power is most demonstrated. It is when its organisation is feeble and impaired that degeneracy and apostasy prevail.

Organisation supposes association, fellowship, officers, institutions, ordinances, sacraments, business arrangements, and courts of law. These were inevitable, and sprang out of the nature of the case. They all were based upon principles which are imbedded in the Christian system and are essential to its life. For some of them Divine or apostolic sanction can be quoted; as for others they sprang up spontaneously and naturally as circumstances demanded or justified their existence.

All these arrangements or appointments have their foundations in righteousness. Every proper claim is adjusted, every right respected, every demand of the spiritual life provided for, the balance of power is set in perfect equipoise, equilibrium is preserved among all parties, and out of infant beginnings the outlines of Church order and polity distinctly emerge.

Not, however, that there can be found in the New Testament a fully appointed system of Church polity. Such is not the method of procedure pursued by Christ. There is no science given ready to man's hand either in nature or revelation. Facts must be collected and collated, experiments must be tried, analyses and comparisons must be instituted, patient trains of reasoning must be evolved before correct conclusions

can be drawn and a system or science can be perfected in any department of truth. So it must be in the region of Church polity. From the facts recorded in the Book of Acts and the Epistles must be gathered those underlying principles which actuated the apostles and the Church established through them. But these were only guiding principles, touching essential matters. Unimportant details which involved no point of conscience and infringed no rightful claim were left in a state of undetermined freedom. Thus elasticity of action was secured, room was left for the exercise of inventiveness and ingenuity, individual preference as to carrying forward great enterprises and movements might be gratified, and opportunity was left for the gospel to adapt itself to varying conditions of race or custom or locality. It is the glory of Christianity that while it announces rules and precepts for the guidance of private and public life from which there can be no deviation, it leaves scope for special adaptations in non-essential matters. Thus it saves friction, it avoids rigidity on the one hand and licentiousness on the other; it allows opportunity for expansion of idea and feeling, it encourages growth of expertness in the work both of persons and communities. "Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty" (2 Cor. iii. 17).

The first Church, according to the description of Luke, was formed out of a miscellaneous mass of Jews and proselytes, who had been carefully educated in the knowledge and observance of the law of Moses, the services of the Temple and the synagogue, with many of the traditions of the elders superadded thereto. Many of these predilections would necessarily cling to them, colouring their ideas, influencing their new Church life, and often unconsciously to themselves predisposing them to adapt the new life to the old mould, or to put the new wine into old bottles. This tendency must be borne in mind when the struggles are considered which apostles and members had to engage in before the traces of the old training were outworn.

CHAPTER II

THE MODEL OF THE EARLY CHURCH

HAVING briefly surveyed the Church in its general features, it becomes necessary to examine more particularly its appointments and arrangements. In doing this it is important to give a backward glance to the ancient Jewish Church in order that the appointments and officials of the Christian Church may be fully understood. It is more necessary to do this as only thereby the term used to describe the leading permanent officers in the Church—elders or presbyters—can be properly estimated. Even when the people of Israel were in Egypt they had elders appointed over them. “Go and gather the elders of Israel together and say unto them,” &c. (Exod. iii. 16). These elders played a very prominent part in the formative life of the people in the wilderness. They attended Moses in the performance of his greatest works (Exod. xvii. 5). They received Divine commissions (Exod. xxiii. 12). They were spectators with Moses and Aaron of the Divine glory in the holy mount (Exod. xxiv. 9). All through the national history up to the Babylonish captivity they were charged with civil and religious functions, and did much to maintain order and morality among the people.

The elders had a larger future before them when the people of Judah returned from the Captivity; when, after the rebuilding of the walls and the temple of Jerusalem, a thorough provision was made for the worship of God and the exposition of the Scriptures in all parts of the land. This was done by the institution of the synagogue, which in succeeding ages became the most effective educator of the people in religion, and the

instrument by which Christianity was disseminated by the apostles. As these prosecuted their missionary journeys they almost invariably repaired to the synagogues, and to the assembled worshippers declared how Christ had come and had risen from the dead.

The synagogue was the outgrowth of the reformation of manners and the revival of religion which took place under Ezra and Nehemiah, and was the means by which they sought to conserve the new spirit which was at work among the people. The institution took firm root, and spread not only throughout Palestine, but wherever the Jews colonised.

In the days of Christ it had attained a position of great importance in the religious life of the Jews. In Palestine it was the healthiest feature of the national life, whilst in other lands it was the bond which preserved the Jew distinct from the Gentiles. In large cities synagogues existed in considerable numbers, and even in small villages they were found in full operation.

Each synagogue was governed by a council of elders or presbyters, one of whom was appointed as president. He was not of a different order to his brethren, but simply *primus inter pares*, the first among equals. In very small communities the care and government of the synagogue devolved upon one elder, who had vested in himself the power of an entire presbytery. The New Testament fully confirms this representation. When Paul and his companions came to Antioch in Pisidia, "they went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and sat down. And after the reading of the law and the prophets the rulers of the synagogue sent unto them, saying, Brethren, if ye have any word of exhortation for the people, say on" (Acts xiii. 15). The rulers here mentioned constituted the presbytery of the synagogue of Antioch. Crispus and Sosthenes are mentioned as two of the rulers of the synagogue at Corinth (Acts xviii. 8, 17). Jairus was a ruler or elder of the synagogue at Capernaum (Mark v. 22).

The business of the synagogue was entirely religious. The elders sometimes discharged civil duties, but the congregation met to offer praise and prayer to God, to hear the Scriptures expounded, to exercise discipline, and to collect or dispense alms.

The elders were elected by the voice of the whole congregation. Definite rules were laid down for the guidance of the people, by which it appears that each member of the synagogue was asked separately whether he considered the person proposed for office suitable and qualified. It is true that at certain times of Jewish history the civil power was charged with the duty of appointing members of the presbytery, and the Sanhedrim authorised delegates to discharge this duty. But when this was the case the Sanhedrim never enforced its powers arrogantly, but invariably consulted the wishes of the people, and carried their concurrence both in the appointment of presbyters and other business.

The elders were ordained to their office by the imposition of hands, this ceremony having the double significance of the conferring of authority and the communication of the Holy Spirit. This method of consecration probably arose from the ordination of Joshua by Moses. "And Joshua the son of Nun was full of the spirit of wisdom, for Moses had laid his hands upon him" (Deut. xxxiv. 9). When a president was ordained, at least three elders were required to be present to perform the imposition of hands. But the president had no special duty apart from the elders save to preside over the council and ordain them. He could do nothing without his colleagues, and every matter of dispute was decided by a majority of votes.

According to Josephus, seven elders were allotted to each synagogue in cities; but in the chief towns this number was much exceeded. Jerusalem, in addition to the Sanhedrim, had two presbyteries, each governed by twenty-three elders, who held their meetings in the halls of the Temple. In addition to the elders every synagogue had its chazzan, or deacon. This was the attendant referred to by Luke: "And He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant, and sat down" (Luke iv. 20). This person had the charge of the book, or scroll of the law, found the place for the reader, received it back from him, and deposited it again in the ark. He also announced the name selected by the president to read the law, overlooked the reader that he might correct any mistakes in his rendering of the word, gave signals to the

congregation when their responses came in, blew the trumpet to announce the approach of the Sabbath, and took care of the furniture of the synagogue.

It is not needful for present purposes to follow further the constitution and arrangements of the synagogue. What has been adduced will suffice to prove how in nearly every particular the Christian Church was modelled upon its pattern.

It has already been noted that the first Church in Jerusalem was composed mainly of Jewish converts, who would be likely to cling with pertinacity to their old customs and predilections. This tendency was shown even by Peter, who sought to adhere to legal ceremonies (Gal. ii. 14). Paul found it expedient to circumcise Timothy in deference to Jewish prejudice (Acts. xvi. 3). To conciliate the same feeling the great apostle took on himself the vow of the Nazarite (Acts xxi. 20, 27). Partly to this feeling, but more to their intrinsic excellence, must be attributed the assimilation of the arrangements of the early Church to those of the synagogue. Some Episcopal writers have sought to prove that the Church was fashioned upon the model of the Temple; and Archbishop Usher has expended much ingenuity in arguing the theory. But the position cannot be maintained if the Epistle to the Hebrews is to be considered as part of the sacred Canon, or if it be borne in mind that the Church is never called by the name of the Temple, nor are its ministers called priests, nor are their functions priestly, nor the services of the Church in any way conformable to the ceremonies and rites of the Temple worship. God has, indeed, a glorious spiritual temple, but it has nothing material or local or ritualistic about it, for the testimony of the rapt seer of Patmos concerning it was: "And I saw no temple therein, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are the temple thereof" (Rev. xxi. 22).

Between the synagogue and the Apostolic Church there was the most striking resemblance in every particular. Both were used for the same purpose, viz., for prayer, praise, reading the Scriptures, and preaching; the one additional religious service of the Church being the observance of the Lord's Supper.

Both places were called by the same name. Christ spoke of the synagogue as the Church (Matt. xviii. 17). James writes of the Churches as synagogues (James. ii. 2).

A more important subject for the purpose of this volume is the similarity of the officers and government of the two institutions. The ruling or governing officers of both were called presbyters, which signifies elders, and is so translated in our English versions of the Bible. In each case also the word "pastor" is used, and to this day the lay council of the modern synagogue is called Parnasim, or the Council of Pastors. The names bishop, overseer, and angel were also applied to each. For all the officers similar qualifications were required. The president of the synagogue was required to be apt to teach, to be a married man with children round him, in order that, as the Codex Taanith says, "he may pray more fervently." This exactly agrees with Paul's advice to Titus and Timothy (1 Tim. iii. 4; Titus i. 6).

The constitutions of these respective councils were remarkably analogous. That of the synagogue was called the presbytery. Paul uses the same term of the Church's ruling body: "With the laying on of the hands of the presbytery" (1 Tim. iv. 14). The Jewish council was composed of a president and presbyters. The Christian council was composed of the same, with the addition of the apostles so long as they lived. But they were a special and transitory element. In many minor arrangements there was an exact reproduction of the older institution by the younger.

In confirmation of the above statements hosts of authorities might be quoted, gathered from both ancient and modern sources. None are really necessary. The facts now stated are mainly gathered from the exhaustive and learned work of Vitranga upon the synagogue and the Church. To Methodists it may be of interest to consider what the judicious Richard Watson said upon the subject, and the following remarks, extracted from the far-famed "Institutes," are therefore presented.

"Much light is thrown upon the constitution of the primitive Churches by recollecting that they were formed very much upon the model of the Jewish synagogues. We have already

seen that the mode of public worship in the primitive Church was taken from the synagogue service, and so also was its arrangement of offices. Each synagogue had its rulers, elders, or presbyters, of whom one was the angel of the Church, or the minister of the synagogue, who superintended the public service, directed those that read the Scriptures, offered up prayers, and blessed the people. The president of the council of elders or rulers was called, by way of eminence, the 'Ruler of the Synagogue,' and in some places, as Acts xiii. 15, we read of these 'rulers' in the plural number—a sufficient proof that one was not elevated in order above the rest."

CHAPTER III

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

I. *The Ministry.*

I N the old Jewish synagogue there were two orders of elders with clearly-defined position and functions. This fact is denied by many Episcopal writers, who base their objection to it upon the authority of the learned Vitringa. But Vitringa did not hold the stringent opinion on this subject which is attributed to him by these writers. He readily conceded that a majority of the elders of the synagogue were not ordinarily employed in teaching or preaching. He affirms that this function was chiefly discharged under the direction of the presiding ruler or elder, who either fulfilled it himself, or called upon one of his colleagues, or upon some Rabbi from some other synagogue who happened to be in attendance. "But," he says, "the chief business of the elders was to rule." This view is controverted by a large number of writers quite equal to Vitringa in erudition and judgment. They hold that while some elders were specially ordained to preach, the majority were set apart to rule only. As the point cannot be discussed at length here, the opinion of Vitringa may be taken as sufficient for the present purpose. This, then, is clear. In each synagogue there was a body of elders which as a whole administered the government and discipline of the congregation. Some of these taught or expounded the Word of God, but the majority did not teach but were occupied with the control or government of the synagogue. This is admitted by every writer who by his learning or genius is a competent authority upon the question.

Among these may be reckoned such eminent Oriental or Rabbinical scholars as Dr. John Lightfoot, Grotius, Neander, Dr. Adam Clark, and hosts of others, comprising leading writers on Church history and order since the days of Ignatius or Origen.

The arrangement of the synagogue in this respect was the arrangement of the apostolic Churches. As to the teaching or preaching elder there is no dispute, and it will be sufficient to reserve proofs of the position taken when the ruling elder is considered.

At a time when claims to sacerdotal position and functions are being urged by the ministers of a Church which for a long time professed to be the bulwark of Protestantism, and which are put forward with an arrogance of assumption strangely unlike the spirit of Him who was "meek and lowly in heart," and equally unlike His apostles, who claimed only to be "fellow-elders" (1 Pet. v. 1) with those whom they ordained to the office, it is important to point out how entirely the New Testament is opposed to such pretensions.

In the New Testament neither the name priest nor anything equivalent to it is applied to the ministers of the Church. This is freely acknowledged by candid Episcopal writers, ranging from Stillingfleet to the learned Bishop Lightfoot. Archbishop Whately expresses this view as follows: "The priests, both of the Jews and heathen nations, constantly bear in the sacred writings the title of *hiereus*, which title they never apply to any of the Christian ministers ordained by the apostles. These are called by the title of *episcopus* (literally superintendent, whence our English name bishop); *presbyterus*, literally elder, and so rendered by our translators, probably to avoid ambiguity but no mention is made by the sacred writers of any such office being established by the apostles as that of 'priest,' such as we find mentioned under that name in Scripture."¹ To quote further authorities, as could be done *ad libitum*, would be useless, as the humblest Bible reader may examine and prove the truth of this for himself. The name of priest under the gospel dispensation belongs to Christ, who is the Great High

¹ "Bampton Lecture," p. 248.

Priest of our profession, and none other can claim it in any official sense without infringing upon His exclusive rights.

The *name* of priest is not applied in Christianity to any distinct order of men, because the *office* is not a part of the gospel system. The distinctive function of the priest is to "offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Heb. v. 1), with the resultant duty of making intercession for the offenders. But the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews conducts his readers through a long and delightfully conclusive argument showing that the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus was an offering so infinitely meritorious as to avail for the sins of the whole world and never needing to be repeated. Its efficacy is represented by the appearance of Jesus in the Holy of Holies above, where He offers a prevailing and unceasing intercession on behalf of men (Heb. vii. 25). Beyond this there is no official priesthood in the gospel, and no priestly functions are required in its services.

There is no analogy or correspondence between the qualifications required in the duties or office of the Jewish priest and the Christian minister. Many things required in the Jewish priest are disallowed in the Christian teacher. The gospel affords no place and gives no scope for either the order or the duties of a priesthood. The contention now so hotly pursued between the clergy of the Church of Rome and the Church of England on the validity of orders is a melancholy spectacle, compared with which Nero fiddling while Rome was burning was a venial sin. Men who profess to be the direct successors of the apostles are quarrelling as to the measure of authority and the dignity of position they occupy in the Church of Christ. And by virtue of some magical influence which the hands of a bishop are supposed to be able to confer, they affect airs of superiority over brethren of other communities which are offensive and detestable. They insist that the sacred influence has descended to them in a direct episcopal line, albeit there are many men found in the line who are pilloried in history as the most dissolute and abandoned characters. They were guilty of murder, simony, adultery, and nameless crimes, and for these men it is claimed that they were the channels of

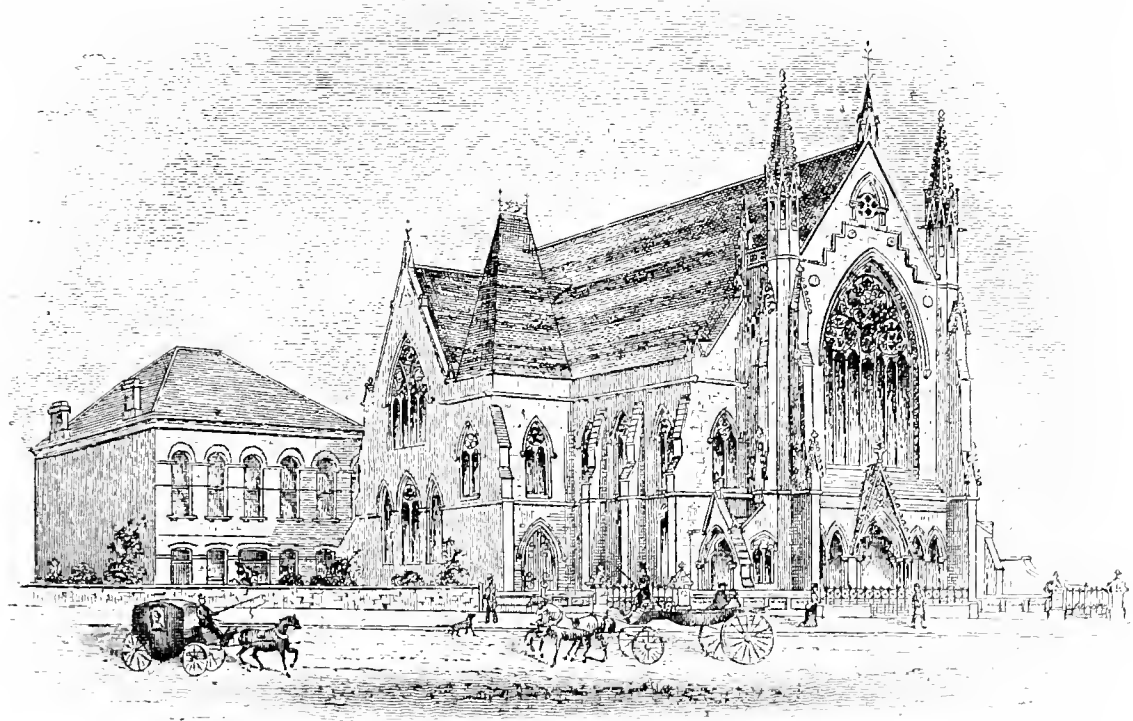
Divine influence, whilst such an honour was denied to men of commanding usefulness and the holiest lives. A simonious Pope like Benedict IX., who sold the gift of God for money, a trafficker in the spoils of the Church like Boniface IX., a heretic and robber like John XXII., a monster of cruelty and dissipation like Alexander Borgia, or an incarnation of all vice and licentiousness like John XXIII., are held to be the depositaries and transmitters of the Holy Ghost, and such privilege is denied to men like John Howe or Matthew Henry, to John Bunyan or Isaac Watts, John Angel James or Charles Haddon Spurgeon. If it be admitted by any of these clergy who shrink from the presumptuousness of denying utterly to men like these a share of the Divine grace they have become partakers of, it is accounted for by the supposition that the gift of the Holy Spirit is so abundant that it has overflowed its natural channels and so reached in an abnormal manner these otherwise unauthorised pretenders. The common sense as well as the Christian feeling of the mass of believers revolt against such teaching which ignores all charity and borders upon blasphemy.

The best proof of the validity of sacred orders is the bearing of Divine fruits. Instruments of marvellous blessing like Jonathan Edwards or Thomas Chalmers, saintly men like Samuel Rutherford or Richard Baxter, have given immeasurably greater proof of being in a true apostolical succession, and of having valid orders than the great majority who claim these privileges for themselves and deny them to others. "By their fruits shall ye know them."

The idea of an official priesthood and the pretensions of an apostolical succession are opposed to the whole genius and character of the gospel. If the ministers of the Churches of Rome and England are sacrificing priests, then the work done by Christ is incomplete, and He is dethroned from His high position as "the ONE Mediator between God and man." If they are called upon to offer "gifts and sacrifices for sins," then the "gift and sacrifice" offered by Christ is incomplete, and needs to be repeated. This makes null the whole teaching of the apostles, and especially of the Epistle of the Hebrews. Bishop Lightfoot, with the candour so charac-

teristic of him, says: "The only priests under the gospel designated as such in the New Testament are the saints, the members of the Christian brotherhood. As individuals all Christians are priests alike."¹

But if the Christian Church has not an official priesthood, it has an order of ministers duly appointed and ordained upon whom is devolved the solemn and important duties of preaching the gospel in its fulness, maintaining the efficiency of Church arrangements, and extending the kingdom of Christ throughout the world.



HIGH STREET, HUDDERSFIELD.

The ministers appointed in the Apostolic Churches included both ordinary and extraordinary agents. The Apostle Paul gives two lists of these. "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues" (1 Cor. xii. 28). "And He gave some to be apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering unto the building up of the

¹ Lightfoot's "Philippians," p. 182.

body of Christ" (Eph. iv. 11, 12). The extraordinary officers here referred to were apostles and prophets, and have been generally so classified because they were called to fulfil temporary although most important duties.

The apostles were charged with a special mission ; they had a unique work, and were endowed with supernatural powers for its performance. They might be termed the plenipotentiaries of the Lord Jesus, being raised up at a crisis in the unfolding of the Divine plan, and having accomplished their function, they passed away, leaving no successors. So also it was with the prophets. They were raised up not so much to predict future events, although sometimes they did so (Acts xi. 27, 28), but more usually to interpret to the Church the marvellous fulfilment of the Old Testament announcements in relation to the Redeemer.

The ordinary officers of the Church which require to be noticed here are pastors and teachers, who may be classed as being really the same. The word pastor literally signifies a shepherd, and in relation to the Christian minister implies the feeding, guidance, and oversight of the flock. Kings are often called shepherds in classical literature, and the Lord Jesus is called "the Chief Shepherd" (1 Pet. v. 4), and "the Great Shepherd of the sheep" (Heb. xiii. 20). So Christian ministers are called pastors because they are invested with the work and authority of shepherds. Pastors belonging to the order of elders or bishops are already spoken of. As to the office of teaching elder, Paul said to the elders of Ephesus : "Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock in the which the Holy Ghost hath made you bishops to feed the Church of God which He purchased with His own blood" (Acts xx. 28). It is the primal duty of a shepherd to provide nourishment for the flock, and so Christ appoints the under shepherds to provide good pasturage on which the sheep may feed. The pre-eminent duty of the pastor is the ministry of the Word. He must "preach the gospel, not in wisdom of words, lest the Cross of Christ should be made void" (1 Cor. i. 17). His instructions are : "Preach the Word, be instant in season, out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching" (2 Tim. iv. 2). His range of subject is large but

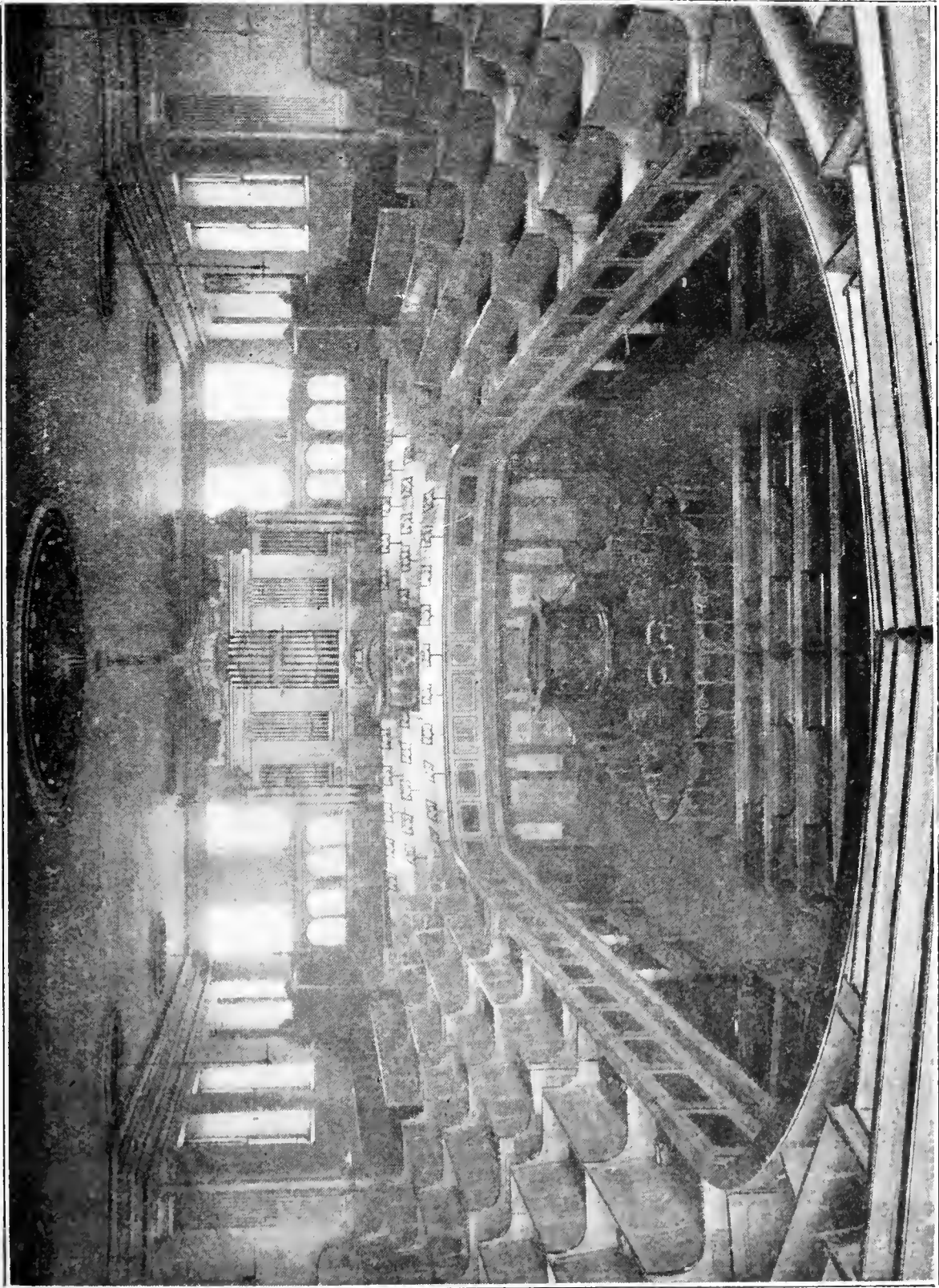
limited. " Holding to the faithful Word which is according to the teaching, that he may be able both to exhort in the sound doctrine and to convict the gainsayers " (Titus i. 9).

As such full and efficient declaration of Divine truth is deemed of the utmost importance for the building up of the Church and the diffusion of the gospel, a preaching ministry has ever been part of the Church's equipment, and no Church is properly constituted unless such officers are called and ordained to this work. It is true that such a ministry was not originally in existence, but the apostles compensated for the lack until the Church had produced within itself the men capable of discharging the essential duties of the office. They were not long in being prepared. As Churches rose throughout Asia Minor and the south of Europe, men of requisite culture and great capability were converted and were commissioned by the apostles or the Church to go forth to proclaim the gospel. The names by which these men were called described their mission as messengers of truth. They were stewards, " ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God " (1 Cor. iv. 1); they were ambassadors, " We are ambassadors therefore on behalf of Christ " (2 Cor. v. 20); they were shepherds, " And I will set up Shepherds over them which shall feed them " (Jer. xxiii. 4); they were watchmen, " they watch in behalf of your souls as they that shall give account " (Heb. xiii. 17). The principle of a ministry properly ordained and set apart for the teaching of Divine truth was established under Judaism by the appointment of the tribe of Levi, from which were chosen the priests who fulfilled the services of the law, but the larger number of whom had the ministry of religious truth among the people committed to their care. Under Christianity the principle was more fully developed. The apostles were called from secular pursuits by Christ (Matt. iv. 18-22, viii. 21, 22; Luke v. 27, 28). After the death of Jesus on the cross the disciples, in the bewilderment and uncertainty which fell upon them, returned to their secular avocations, but Christ recalled them and commissioned them afresh to undertake their great spiritual work (John xxi. 15-19; Matt. xxviii. 19). They never showed any further uncertainty upon

the subject. The appointment of the first deacons was made with the avowed purpose, "We will continue stedfastly in prayer and in the ministry of the Word" (Acts vi. 4).

Following the apostles a line of noble men arose who were wholly devoted to the work of the ministry, such as Timothy, Titus, Silas, Mark, Luke, Barnabas, and others, to some of whom Paul addressed those exhortations which have been the guide and inspiration of the true minister through all subsequent ages. And to the Churches Paul gave direct charge that they were to render to the ministry with readiness the support which was its fitting right and due (1 Cor. ix. 3-14; Gal. vi. 6; 1 Tim. v. 18). The ministry thus divinely appointed and provided for had the further duty assigned to it of "ruling" in the Church. This "rule" was real and effective, but not exclusive nor arbitrary. It is evident from statements in the New Testament that the pastors had their position in the presbytery side by side with those who only ruled or governed. "The bishop (overseer) therefore must be without reproach . . . one that ruleth well his own house . . . for if a man knoweth not how to rule his own house, how shall he care for the house of God?" (1 Tim. iii. 2-4). "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the Word and in teaching" (1 Tim. v. 17). "Remember them that had the rule over you which spake unto you the Word of God (Heb. xiii. 7). "The elders therefore among you I exhort who are also a fellow-elder . . . tend the flock of God which is among you, exercising the oversight, not of constraint but willingly, according unto God . . . neither as lording it over the charge allotted to you but making yourselves ensamples to the flock" (1 Pet. v. 1-3).

From these passages several important conclusions may be drawn. The minister can only "preach the Word." Nothing is left to his own option as to the subject-matter of his message. He must not come behind nor add unto what is given him to declare (Rev. xxii. 18). He is an ambassador, and must only deliver the message he receives. This was the limitation of Paul's preaching: "I delivered unto you that which I also received" (1 Cor. xv. 3).



BETHESDA, HANLEY.

Paul defines ministers as "stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. iv. 2). The word literally is "house-steward," and "it is required in such that a man be found faithful." The minister or preaching elder is, therefore, undoubtedly a legislator, and must bear rule in the household of God. But ministers or pastors are not alone or irresponsible in the government of the Church, and are expressly forbidden to exercise lordship. The tenderness and consideration of the father in the family is proposed as the model for the pastor in the house of God (1 Tim. iii. 5). Therefore self-seeking, harshness, tyranny, and arrogance are forbidden in the "ruling" required from the minister of God.

Although a separated order of ministers is provided in the scheme of Church life in the New Testament it need not be supposed that those who have preaching gifts outside that order are precluded from exercising them. The possession of the gift is the right to its use. The separated ministry is both necessary and convenient for carrying out the Divine plan, but both under Judaism and Christianity the exercise of teaching power wherever it exists is sanctioned and commanded by God. Therefore those outside the consecrated line of the priests and prophets, such laymen as David the king, Daniel the statesman, Elisha the ploughman, and Amos the farmer, were at times called to deliver the Word of the Lord. It has been more conspicuously so under the gospel. It has accepted and utilised all gifts which have been consecrated upon the altar, and an order of lay preachers has been maintained from Ananias of Damascus downwards to the scores of thousand of useful and devoted men who, whilst engaged in secular pursuits, supply innumerable congregations in Methodism with the Word of life.

It is of importance to note that in the book of the Acts and the Epistles the names elder and bishop are synonymous and are used interchangeably. Paul summoned to Miletus the "elders" of the Church at Ephesus, and in his address to them exhorts them to fulfil the office of "bishops" with diligence and devotion (Acts xx. 17, 28). In the advice he gives to Titus the same indifferent use of the words occurs. Titus is instructed to ordain "elders" in every city for

a "bishop" must be blameless, &c. (Titus i. 5-7). Peter also appeals to the "elders" of the Church, and in the next sentence speaks of them as "bishops" (1 Pet. v. 1, 2). The same interchange of the word is found in the writings of Clemens Romanus, a friend of Paul, and is recognised by Hilary, Jerome, Chrysostom, and other early Church authorities. This fact completely disposes of the alleged three orders of the ministry upon which the Church theory of episcopacy is built. It proves also that the simple and unpretentious bishop of the New Testament was a complete contrast to the wealthy, arrogant, and ambitious prelates of the Romish and Anglican hierarchies which ecclesiastical history has recorded.

The Methodist New Connexion, which was established not more to vindicate the proper standing of the laity in the Church, than to obtain for the ministry its proper functions and prerogatives, has been sedulously careful during its hundred years of history to maintain an efficient and faithful ministry, and to give it due prominence and honour in all its arrangements and appointments. Whilst it has not constituted the ministry as the sole and exclusive authority in the Church, it has secured and guarded its position in all Church Courts and Assemblies which are within its order. The ministers are *ex-officio* members of all Church, Leaders', Circuit, and District Meetings. In each of these the minister is the chairman by virtue of his office, thus having offered to him the honour his sacred calling requires, and being able to exercise the influence which his office legitimately claims. He is thus in the position of the president of the synagogue, *primus inter pares*. This first place in the official meetings of the Denomination is secured for him by the Deed Poll, and the Rules of the Connexion.

It is true that no such provision is expressed in regard to the presidency of the Annual Conference. But the omission has occurred because it never occurred to the founders of the Body or their successors that any other appointment than a ministerial president could be suggested. No proposition that a layman should preside in the Conference was ever made, and if it could have been made by any one so utterly

unacquainted with the prevailing sentiment of the Connexion as to entertain the idea, it would have been repelled by the consent of the whole community. Nor has there ever been a layman who could have been named for it who would have consented to be nominated for the post if by so doing he was offering a slight to the members of the ministry. During the whole period of its existence the ministry has been sustained in every Scriptural prerogative attaching to the office by the general consent of the laity. No note of discontent has ever been heard from the ministry in regard to disrespect or inconsiderateness from the people, and no occasion has ever arisen to repel any undue arrogance in the ministry by the people.

CHAPTER IV

THE OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH

The Ruling Elder.

THE office of the ruling elder in the Methodist New Connexion is the distinguishing feature between it and the Parent Body. The admission of an officer so called to the exercise of power alongside of the teaching elder, so as to give ministers and laymen equality of authority in all deliberative and legislative assemblies, is the sole point remaining out of the many causes of dissension and final rupture in the struggle for Methodist reform one hundred years ago. This indeed was the main cause of difference then, as the other subjects in dispute, which have long since been conceded in the Wesleyan Church, were rather accidental than fundamental matters of controversy. Even in regard to the position of the ruling elder Wesleyan Methodism has altered its attitude, and if the signs of the times are to be trusted they distinctly indicate a much further advance in the direction of the first Methodist reformers. It is the ardent prayer and desire of the great mass of the members of the Methodist New Connexion that so much may be conceded upon this remaining point of difference by the Parent Body, as that all ground for further separation between them may be removed. This is desirable not only for the consummation of formal and organic union between the two denominations, although this would be no small gain to the cause of Christianity generally, and would conspicuously promote the Divine glory by being a decided step towards the accomplishment of the Redeemer's high-

priestly prayer as to the oneness of His people. But also that thereby spiritual energy may be conserved and utilised, that injurious discussions and dissensions may be rendered impossible in the future, and that Christian devotion and zeal may be greatly increased.

Discussions which distract and divisions of feeling which neutralise the higher life of the Church may be surely anticipated to occur in a Methodist body, unless the laity has its due place allowed to it as a legislating force. Methodism, more than any other Protestant community, has gripped the people, trained them for various service and kept them busy, with lay preaching, adingel of classes, teaching the young, and engaging in aggressive agencies of many kinds. Thus it has given development both to the spiritual and intellectual activities of its children. If while doing this it should deny them their proper share in legislative courts it will find perpetual agitations arising, by the people clamouring for their rights, which will impede its progress and mar its peace.

Since the terrible rent in the Mother Church of Methodism in 1849 it has been agitated by the struggle for lay representation, which was met by the peaceful concession of 1877, by which a Representative Session of Conference, consisting equally of ministers and laymen, was permitted to meet at the close of the Pastoral Session. It was soon found, however, that this arrangement was only a semblance of legislation properly understood, and further discussion arose, which was silenced for a time by moving the Representative Session from the end to the middle of the Conference. The question is now being agitated afresh. There is a strong and widespread discontent with this unsatisfactory arrangement. The next step, which is inevitable sooner or later, must be to have the Representative Session in front of the Pastoral Session, with the power to elect the president, and to transact the business proper of the Connexion. This step will approximate the polity of the Parent Body so closely to that of the Child as to lead to anxious inquiry whether the remaining and minor differences are of sufficient importance to justify further separation, or whether loyalty to Christ should not

inspire some effort towards the unification of Methodism in England.

The only possible safeguard against periodical dissension in a Methodist Body is the adoption of a distribution of legislative and administrative power such as is characteristic of Presbyterianism—that is, the admission of the ruling elder in all Church Courts in a fair proportion of numbers, and with an equal standing with the elders who not only rule but “labour in the Word and in teaching.” The Church as a whole is one, and each separate Church or congregation represents a similar unity. It consists not of ministers only or laymen only, but of ministers and people joined in one spirit for the promotion of a common object. It should therefore be so governed as to embody and manifest this oneness. This can only be done by self-government. But this means government by the whole, either through every member taking a direct part as in Congregationalism, or by a system of equitable and efficient representation which expresses the general will and purpose as in Presbyterianism.

This important point can only be settled by an appeal to the New Testament. As far as is possible all predilections or prejudices should be laid aside that a proper judgment may be formed upon a subject upon which the future welfare of Methodism largely depends.

There is a helpful simplicity about apostolic procedure in constituting the first Christian Churches. Elders (*presbuteroi*), or bishops (*episcopoi*), and deacons (*diakonoï*), were appointed in every Church. In each case there was a plurality of elders. Nowhere is the election or appointment of only a single elder recorded. Passages bearing directly upon the matter are to be found (Acts xiv. 23, xv. 4–6, xx. 28 ; 1 Thess. v. 12, 13 ; 1 Tim. v. 17 ; Titus i. 5 ; Heb. xiii. 7 ; Jas. v. 14 ; 1 Pet. v. 1–3). In all these passages the following facts are clearly affirmed. No matter how small a Church might be, more than one elder was appointed ; the people were everywhere exhorted to submit to the authority of the elders with loyal affection ; and the elders were reminded that both firmness and meekness must be mingled in their administration of Church affairs. It cannot be reasonably supposed that in

all the Apostolic Churches a plurality of elders was required if the office was limited to the pastor. Some of these Churches were very insignificant, and one person could easily have sustained the teaching office. But it is evident that others were associated with him for the purposes of legislation and management. Thus the statements of the Scriptures are perfectly clear.

Several passages from the Epistles of Paul confirm the position here taken. In writing to the Church at Rome he says: "Having gifts differing according to the grace given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of our faith; or ministry, let us give ourselves to our ministry; or he that teacheth, to his teaching; or he that exhorteth, to his exhorting: he that giveth, let him do it with liberality; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that showeth mercy, with cheerfulness" (Rom. xii. 6-8). Here "he that ruleth" is distinguished from all other officers. The prophets expounded the prophecies, the givers discharged the function of deacons, the teachers and exhorters declared the truth, and distinct from all these was "the ruler." The word (*ho proistámenos*) denotes those who were set in authority over a Church (I Thess. v. 12), presbyters (I Tim. v. 17). Their special qualification was probably the gift of government (*kubernesis*, I Cor. xii. 28), their duties being such as the restraint of disorder, correction of abuses, and enforcement of discipline.¹ In writing to the Corinthians Paul supplies a catalogue of the officers of the early Churches. "God hath set some in the Church, first apostles, secondly prophets, thirdly teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, divers kinds of tongues" (I Cor. xii. 28). Here evidently "governments" mean governors, as helps must mean helpers, and they are placed in a category distinct from all other officers. It is impossible to consider them as other than as the ruling elders as appointed in the synagogue, and resuscitated in the Christian Church. The exposition of the verse supplied by the learned Peter Martyr, the Italian reformer, in his Commentary upon the Epistle, strengthens this conclusion: "Governments. Those who are honoured with

¹ "Speaker's Commentary," *in loco*.

this function are such as were fitted for the work of government, and who know how to conduct everything relating to discipline righteously and prudently. For the Church of Christ had its government. And because a single pastor was not able to accomplish everything himself, there were joined with him in the ancient Church certain elders, chosen from among the people, well informed and skilled in spiritual things, who formed a kind of parochial senate. These, with the pastor, deliberated on every matter relating to the care and edification of the Church. Which thing Ambrose makes mention of in writing on the Epistle to Timothy. Among these elders the pastor took the lead, not as a tyrant, but rather as a consul presiding in a Council of Senators."

Once more must Paul be summoned to bear testimony on this subject. In writing to Timothy he says : " Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the Word and in teaching " (1 Tim. v 17). This passage should be accepted as decisive on the point in question. So indeed it would be if other systems had not grown up in the course of history which for their justification demand another interpretation. The apostle declares that the elders " who rule well " are worthy of double honour, but " especially those who labour in the Word and in teaching." If it can be supposed that only one class of elders existed in the Church, and that all were preachers and teachers of the Word, the advice of the text is confusing and self-contradictory. Even Episcopal writers are led to admit the correctness of the view taken here. Dr. R. Whittaker, Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge, says : " By these words the apostle evidently distinguishes between the bishops and inspectors of the Church. If all who rule well be worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the Word and doctrine, it is plain that there were some who did not so labour ; for if all had been of this description the meaning would have been absurd ; but the word *especially* points out a difference. If I should say that all who study well at the University are worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the study of theology, I must either mean that all do not apply themselves to the study of theology, or I should speak nonsense. Wherefore I

confess that to be the most genuine sense by which pastors and teachers are distinguished from those who only governed." To a like effect writes the erudite and judicious Bishop Whitby in commenting upon this text, but it will be sufficient to quote only the testimony of the greatest of early Nonconformists, Dr. John Owen. "This is a text," he says, "of incontrollable evidence, if it had anything to conflict withal but prejudice and interest. A rational man who is unprejudiced, who never heard of the controversy about ruling elders, can hardly avoid an apprehension that there are two sorts of elders, some who labour in the Word and doctrine, and some who do not so do. The truth is it was interest and prejudice which first caused some learned men to strain their wits to find out evasions from the evidence of this testimony. Being found out, some others of meaner abilities have been entangled by them. There are elders then in the Church. There are or ought to be so in every Church. With these elders the whole rule of the Church is trusted. All these and only they do rule in it."¹ A multitude of weighty authorities might be quoted in addition to these to a like effect, but these are sufficient.

The teaching of the passages already quoted is supplemented by others, which require thoughtful consideration. In writing to the Christians of Thessalonica Paul says: "But we beseech you, brethren, to know them that labour among you and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them exceeding highly in love for their works' sake" (1 Thess. v. 12, 13). Also, "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit to them; for they watch on behalf of your souls as they that shall give account" (Heb. xiii. 17). It is scarcely less than certain that the apostle in these words is addressing individual Churches. He speaks of them as having set over them by Divine appointment a body of ruling officers, who were called not only to teach but to exercise authority in the Church. This style of Church order has its counterpart neither in Episcopacy, which lodges all authority in the hand of the bishop, nor Congregationalism, which has the whole body of the members as the legislative court, but in Presbyterianism or Connexionalism, which has the Church session,

¹ "The True Nature of a Gospel Church," p. 141.

or the Leaders' Meeting, as the administrative authority over the Church. An objection has sometimes been urged against the theory of the different classes of elders here advocated, on the ground that the term *præstōtes*, used (1 Tim. v. 17) in relation to the ruling elder, is also used as to the teaching elder (chap. iii. 5), and that therefore no distinction can properly be made between one and the other. It is not, however, intended to affirm that the function of ruling is limited to the officer known in ecclesiastical history as "the ruling elder." *All the elders ruled*, but all did not preach. Those who ministered "in the Word and in teaching," were also governors and exercised authority equally with those who only ruled. This is the only supposition which fully explains and harmonises all the references in the apostolic writings to elders. It exactly coincides also with the distinction which has been shown to have existed in the synagogue of the time of our Lord. The authorities in favour of this presentation are legion, and may be drawn not only from Presbyterian, but also from Congregational, Episcopal, and even Roman Catholic writers.

Another class of officers ordained in the Apostolic Churches was that of deacons. The story of their first election is recorded in Acts vi., but they are also referred to in Phil. i. 1, 1 Tim. iii. 8, 10, 12, 13. Their duties as deacons were to distribute the alms of the Church under the direction of the apostles, to care for the poor widows, to receive the offerings of the people, to provide suitably for the elders, and to distribute to all that were sick or needy. The office, so far as it is described in Scripture, was chiefly one of temporalities. The deacons were subordinated to the elders, as is taught, Acts xi. 30, where it is narrated that money was sent by the Church at Antioch to the poor at Jerusalem by the elders. Neander judiciously suggests that in the distribution of the funds collected, the elders entrusted each deacon with a sum sufficient for his own department.

The deacons, while appointed to manage the temporal affairs of the Church, were men of great devotion and spiritual power. They sometimes rose into a higher region of Church work, and preached the gospel with much success. Stephen

and Philip became eminent for their gifts in preaching. It is nowhere recorded, however, that deacons became elders, but as many similar men do now they exercised all their gifts as they had opportunity. Probably they belonged to the order of lay preachers already referred to which has rendered such eminent service to Protestant communities since the Reformation, and especially to Methodism. Preaching is never said to be part of the duty of the diaconate, but deacons may preach, not by virtue of their office, but because they have the necessary gifts and because "the love of Christ constrains them." Happy is the Church that is willing to avail itself of such help, and to invent opportunities for the use of such consecrated gifts.

The name of deacon is still preserved in the Episcopal, Presbyterian, and Congregational Churches. The office is preserved in Methodism, and the officers are known as stewards. To them the financial and temporal business of the Churches is entrusted, and they sit with the preaching and ruling elders in meetings held for deliberative and legislative purposes.

It is the firm conviction of the members of the Methodist New Connexion that by the arrangement in its polity for the lay elder to have his well-defined position in the Leaders', Quarterly, and District meetings, and the Annual Conference, the lines of Scripture in regard to Church order and government are rigidly followed. This conviction, it may again be said, is strengthened by the unqualified testimony of one hundred years during which the arrangement has been in operation.

CHAPTER V

THE ULTIMATE PRINCIPLE OF GOVERNMENT

IT has been demonstrated that the Apostolic Churches contained properly qualified and duly appointed officers, who exercised authority and administered the affairs of the body politic. But some limiting considerations should be stated concerning these officers. When obedience to them is commanded by the apostles, it is not obedience to a man or a body of men who exert irresponsible authority. Christ never intended that His Church should be at the will of any persons save such as were properly qualified, not only with intellectual gifts, but spiritual unction, and as were appointed by the Church in a constitutional manner. These persons were responsible to God and to the Church for the rightful exercise of their functions. Where these imperative conditions are not observed the rulers are apt to be ambitious and self-seeking, with the result that the house of God becomes a scene of confusion and apostasy.

The Church member who followed the exhortation of the apostles, to obey those who had the rule over them, did not abnegate any right which belonged to him as a man or as a citizen of the Divine kingdom. Each believer had his place in the general Church Assembly, which was the ultimate depository of Church power on the human side. Here he could exercise his legitimate influence, give expression to his convictions, or tender his vote upon such matters as came within the scope of the gathering.

Obedience to Church rulers can only be enforced by moral suasion or appeal. The material forces at the disposal of the civil magistrate have no relation to the life of the Church.

The State deals with men's persons and properties, but the Church deals with their thoughts and their souls. It must not attempt to coerce the one or bind the other. It must inform, guide, persuade, and win, and only in the case of recalcitrance must it proceed to the extremity of exclusion from its fellowship. It becomes important to ascertain where the power of appeal is invested in the Church, with whom lies the appointment of officers, and to what tribunal these are subject—to find out, indeed, the true balance of power and its Scriptural limits or prerogatives.

The Church has within itself complete power of government. It can exercise no option as to the doctrines it proclaims, the standard of morality it acknowledges, or the sacraments it observes. These are ordained and settled by the Lord Jesus, and from His authority there can be no appeal. But in the government and arrangements of the Church, except as to guiding principles, there is some elasticity afforded to the members, and here opportunity is given for the exercise of reason, foresight, judgement, administrative faculty, and governing skill.

One influential party in the Church repudiates the idea that any legislative power is lodged within it, but that it is the duty of the civil magistrate to wield authority over it and exercise discipline within it. This theory was invented by Erastus, a Dutch physician of the sixteenth century, who urged that the Church was subject to the State, and that consequently the head of the State was the head of the Church. This doctrine was a violent reaction from the despotic pretensions of the Papacy, and when England repudiated the Pope of Rome, King Henry VIII. was acknowledged by Convocation as "Protector and only Supreme Head of the Church and Clergy of England." It is needless to enter here into any refutation of this absurd theory or to point out at length the dishonour done to Christ by the acknowledgment of such villains as Charles II. or George IV as the head of His Church. If the New Testament teaches anything, it clearly lays down that the Church has the inalienable right of regulating its own affairs, appointing its own officers, and arranging its own worship.

The theory of Episcopacy, which lodges the legislating power of the Church in the hands of bishops, has quite as little claim to Scripture authority as Erastianism. It has already been pointed out that an order of bishops distinct from elders has no recognition in the New Testament, but that the two names are used indifferently to describe the same office. It is true that soon after the apostolic days the presiding officer in the presbytery began to assume airs of superiority and appropriated the name of 'bishop' as indicating a distinct and superior position. This is admitted by Bishop Lightfoot, who, speaking of the three orders of the ministry acknowledged by the Roman and Anglican Churches, says: "It is clear that at the close of the apostolic age the two lower orders of the threefold ministry were firmly and widely established; but traces of the third and highest order, the Episcopate properly so called, are few and indistinct."¹ The same writer seeks to show that James was the first Christian bishop because he seemed to speak *ex cathedra* in the Council of Jerusalem (Acts xv.). But he also admits that in other places in the Acts he is referred to not as being pre-eminent, but as only one amongst a number. He omits, however, to state that if James did exercise any special authority in the Church it would be not because he was a bishop, but that he was an apostle. He is careful to explain that even if James exercised any episcopal authority it was rudimentary, and that no other trace of such function is to be found in the apostolic age. "But while the episcopal office thus existed in the mother Church of Jerusalem from very early days, at least in a rudimentary form, the New Testament presents no distinct traces of such organisation in the Gentile congregations. The government of the Gentile Churches, as there represented, exhibits two successive stages of development tending in this direction; but the third stage, in which Episcopacy definitely appears, still lies beyond the horizon."² That James assumed any episcopal functions even of the most rudimentary kind may well be doubted. He was as an apostle charged with the care of all the

¹ Lightfoot's "Philippians," pp. 193, 196.

² *Ibid.* p. 196.



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Churches, and there is not the slightest vestige of proof that he was a pre-eminent overseer of any in particular.

Congregationalism affirms that the Church collectively, consisting of ministers and people, has all power vested in itself, that all who exercise authority therein derive it from the entire body of those in Church fellowship, and are responsible to them for the proper discharge of their functions. Presbyterianism, on the other hand, maintains that the power of governing the Church belongs to certain officers, who, deriving their authority from Christ, are accountable to Him for the right use of it, these officers being not lords over the heritage, but helpers of the people's faith and servants in the gospel to them, ruling over them with meekness and love.

The Methodist New Connexion has combined within its system of Church polity features of both these systems. It is Presbyterian as to the appointment of preaching and ruling elders, and in the adoption of some other arrangements, to be noted hereafter ; but it is Congregational to the extent that the whole Church is called upon to take part in the election of the officers, and that its various official Courts are representative of the people, being responsible to them for the due fulfilment of the laws and discipline of the Church. The fundamental principle which pervades its whole constitution and life is : "That the Church itself is entitled, either collectively in the persons of its members, or representatively by persons chosen out of and by itself, to a voice and influence in all the acts of legislation and government."¹ That this method of procedure corresponds with that pursued by the apostles and the early Church will now be demonstrated.

It will be convenient to consider the passages which bear upon this subject in the order in which they stand in the Bible.

(a) The whole body of the Church elects an apostle in the place of Judas (Acts i. 15-26). From this account it is clear that the whole company of believers first nominated and then elected Matthias to office. It is not material to discuss here whether the election of Matthias was annulled

¹ Jubilee Volume, p. 143.

and superseded by the call of Paul into the apostolate, or whether the use of the lot was justified under the circumstances, or whether the Church had the Divine sanction in proceeding with such an important piece of business before the descent of the Holy Ghost. The one matter of moment is that the apostles, in the choice of a successor to Judas, did not assume to make the appointment themselves, when upon many grounds they might have claimed to do so as their exclusive function. But the whole company of one hundred and twenty believers was consulted, a nomination of two was made by them, and then all voted, with the result that Matthias was chosen.

Some eminent expositors have urged that the apostles nominated Joseph and Matthias for office, and the multitude elected. Even if this had been so, little would be gained by the objectors for their opinion. But when scrutinised there is nothing in the narrative to uphold such a view. The initiative was taken by Peter, but the apostles as a body are not named, and the common-sense interpretation to be put upon the account evidently is, that the whole congregation took part in the entire procedure. This was the opinion of early Church writers, as witness the following exposition given by Chrysostom, confirmed by Cyprian and many similar authorities: "Peter did everything here with the common consent—nothing by his own will and authority. He left the judgement to the multitude to secure the greater respect to the elected and to free himself from every invidious reflection. They appointed two, but he did not himself appoint them—it was the act of all."

(b) The people elect the first Church officers and constitute a diaconate (Acts vi. 2-6). In this election it will be observed that the apostles again contented themselves with suggesting the course to be pursued. Considering the youthfulness of the Church and the inexperience of the believers, it might have been in accordance with propriety that the inspired companions of Christ should not only have initiated the steps to be taken, but themselves have fulfilled the whole business. But, notwithstanding their unique pre-eminence as apostles, possessed of miraculous gifts of healing and teach-

ing, they respected the rights of their fellow-members ; they had no desire to exercise lordship ; they seemed to realise that they had to set the pattern of procedure for all coming time, and therefore they commended the appointment to the body of the faithful, only setting forth the qualifications to be sought in the officers to be chosen.

Such popular form of election was exactly on the lines adopted by Moses in the wilderness life of Israel, and also by the Jews in the working of the synagogue. As to the former it is written : "Take you wise men, and understanding, and known, according to your tribes, and I will make them heads over you. And ye answered me, and said, The thing which thou hast spoken, is good for us to do. So I took the heads of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you" (Deut. i. 13-15). As to the latter case, Josephus says : "All public affairs were transacted in the synagogue, the people having been consulted." The apostles had been trained under this democratic system, and had breathed in the genius of it. They and the people fell, naturally, into the method prevalent around them. This fact explains how it is that the narrative of this appointment is recorded without any comment or explanation of the course pursued.

(c) In the appointment of elders it was evidently the custom for the people to exercise a share in the election. "And when they had appointed for them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed" (Acts xiv. 23). The term here rendered "appointed" (*cheirotónésantes*) literally means, chosen by the hand. It signifies the election of a person by stretching forth or lifting up the hand. This was the common mode adopted by the people of Athens in popular appointments. The verb *cheirotoneō* is used in many cases to describe a popular election or appointment either in the Church or the State ; e.g. : "And we have sent together with him the brother whose praise in the gospel is spread through all the churches ; and not only so, but who was also *appointed* (*cheirotoneῖtheis*) to travel with us in the matter of this grace," &c. (2 Cor. viii. 18, 19). Here the unknown disciple who accompanied Paul on his mission of mercy to the suffering Jews in Judea is described

by the same word, indicating that he had been selected by the stretching out of the hand in the Church as a suitable fellow-worker with the apostle. The word often occurs in the writings of the early Fathers of the Church in connection with similar events. As to the exact mode of procedure employed by the apostles in the appointment of the elders in the Churches of Asia Minor, nothing certain can be decided, save that in some manner the popular wish and feeling found expression. This was the opinion of the early Fathers, of the leading reformers, and of the greatest Protestant divines. The case is clearly put by Dr. S. Davidson : " It may fairly be inferred that the appointment of elders here recorded was not made contrary to the wish of the disciples. It is impossible to discover whether the people signified their wishes to Paul and Barnabas by pointing out to them individuals whom they judged to be qualified for office, or whether the two did, in the first instance, constitute and set over the disciples Christians known to themselves, the people wisely concurring in the measure adopted for their edification by men divinely appointed to collect and organise Christian communities. In either case the people's wishes were not contravened. Whether the initiative act originated with the members or the two apostles we do not undertake to decide. One thing alone must be maintained, that all was done with the full approval of the brethren." ¹

(d) The admission of members to Church fellowship, and their exclusion on the ground of misconduct, are functions which the Church as a whole is called upon to discharge. So Paul instructed the Church at Rome. " But him that is weak in faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. One man hath faith to eat all things : but he that is weak eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth set at nought him that eateth not ; and let not him that eateth not judge him that eateth " (Rom. xiv. 1-3) ; " Wherefore receive ye one another, even as Christ also received you, to the glory of God " (xv. 7) ; " Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which are causing the divisions and occasions of stumbling, contrary to the doctrine which ye learned : and turn away

¹ " Ecclesiastical Polity of New Testament," p. 162.

from them" (xvi. 17). These exhortations freely concede the right of the whole body of believers to admit to communion even those who were timorous in the faith, that they might be built up and established. So, when an unworthy disciple had crept into the Church at Corinth, the apostle wrote instructions that he was to be excluded. But who was to exercise the discipline? Not the pastor nor the elders alone. "It is actually reported that there is fornication among you. And ye are puffed up, and



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did not rather mourn, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, being absent in body but present in spirit, have already, as though I were present, judged him that hath so wrought this thing, in the name of our Lord Jesus, ye being gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved" (1 Cor. v 1-5). In this case the sentence of expulsion might be pronounced by the Presbytery, but the voice of the people was to be lifted up

and their mind expressed. But the apostles go further than this. It might be that the unworthy communicant might repent of his sin. Then Paul provides that he should be re-admitted to communion, and have the opportunity of bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. "But if any hath caused sorrow, he hath caused sorrow, not to me, but in part (that I press not too heavily) to you all. Sufficient to such a one is this punishment which was inflicted *by the many*; so that contrariwise *ye* should rather forgive him and comfort him, lest by any means such a one should be swallowed up by his overmuch sorrow" (2 Cor. ii. 5-7). It has been objected in respect to the two passages quoted that the excision and restoration of the erring member were both instigated by the apostle, and were not the free action of the Church. There is no force in the objection. The apostles in their unique position of authority, as plenipotentiaries of the Lord Jesus, might have been within their rights if they had exercised much more authority than they did. If they had been less self-forgetting it is probable that they would have grasped after power, as many Church rulers have done when the opportunity has come to them. But in their noble zeal, not only for the spread of the gospel, but for the education of the Church in self-government, they abstained from the direct assumption of power wherever the congregation of the faithful could be trained to the use of it. Thus they fostered the Church into self-reliance and vigorous strength.

The course pursued by the apostles as to this vital matter was that which Jesus Himself commanded; who thus recognised the propriety of the Church dealing with its members. "If thy brother sin against thee, go show him his fault between thee and him alone; if he hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he hear thee not, take with thee one or two more, that at the mouth of two witnesses, or three, every word may be established. And if he refuse to hear them tell it unto the Church; and if he refuse to hear the Church also, let him be unto thee as the Gentile and the publican" (Matt. xviii. 17).

Whether the government of the Church should be vested finally in its own hands, or be limited to the pastorate, is the

crux of the difference between various denominations of the universal Church. The foregoing considerations sufficiently prove that Christ and His divinely endowed apostles bestowed upon the Churches, including pastors, elders, deacons, and members, the prerogative of admitting or restoring to, or excluding from, the membership of the Church.

(c) The privileges of the Church do not terminate here. In the apostolic days it was entrusted with the right of dealing with unfaithful pastors and teachers. Therefore the people are told : " If any one cometh unto you, and bringeth not this teaching, receive him not into your house, and give him no greeting " (2 John, 10). Paul gives similar counsel : " As we have said before, so now I say again, If any man preacheth unto you any gospel other than that which ye received, let him be anathema " (Gal. i. 9). Several other passages afford collateral evidence as to the duty of the Church to preserve with jealous care a pure and faithful ministry. The Lord Himself said : " Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravening wolves " (Matt. vii. 15). John was especially emphatic on the point : " Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are of God " (1 John iv. 1). He commends the Church at Ephesus for its fidelity to the truth : " I know thy works, and thy toil and patience, and that thou canst not bear evil men, and didst try them which call themselves apostles, and they are not, and didst find them false " (Rev. ii. 2). The Church at Pergamum is severely rebuked because it tolerated false teachers and did not exercise discipline over them (ii. 14-17). And in like manner the Church at Thyatira was threatened with punishment for tolerating a woman who deceived people by pretending to the gift of prophecy (ii. 20-24). The advice given by Paul to Timothy is of like character as to both bishops and deacons. As to a bishop : " Moreover he must have good testimony *from them that are without* ; lest he fall into reproach and the snare of the devil " (1 Tim. iii. 7). As to the deacons : " Let these also first be proved ; let them serve as deacons if they be blameless " (iii. 10). This right of rejecting unworthy pastors was for a long time used by the early Church.

(f) One more illustrative testimony may be given of the anxious readiness shown by the apostles to discountenance any tendency which might be developed to lodge the whole legislative or administrative authority of the Church in the hands of pastors or officials. When the famine occurred in Judea, and collections were made by the Gentile Churches for the relief of their starving brethren at Jerusalem, the apostles would not of themselves assume the task of carrying or distributing the bounty. Therefore Paul writes: "Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I gave order to the Churches of Galatia, so also do ye. Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come. And when I arrive, whomsoever ye shall approve by letters, them will I send to carry your bounty unto Jerusalem: and if it be meet for me to go also, they shall go with me" (1 Cor. xvi. 1-4). This instruction was literally followed, and concerning the wisdom of the choice made, Paul spoke approvingly in a passage already quoted (2 Cor. viii. 16-21).

The evidence here presented from the New Testament contains precepts and commands from Jesus Christ and His apostles; it narrates facts of Church procedure and discipline which occurred under the presence and sanction and even the express orders of the apostles. If these be focussed into one view, they will be found to prove that the early Churches were called upon to choose an apostle, to appoint deacons, to vote in the appointment of elders, to receive Church members, to excise the unworthy, to restore the penitent, and to elect delegates to convey and distribute the offerings of the saints for the suffering Churches. In fact, the Churches in their collective capacity exercised authority in all matters of appointment and arrangement as the ultimate courts of appeal and administration.

This is quite consistent with the exhortations of the apostles to submit to the elders and rulers. The people were to obey authorities they had themselves chosen to carry out the laws and discipline of the Church. Thus they were trained to manifest the self-control and magnanimity of a manly spiritual life, which submits to obey laws which are voluntarily

assumed, and offers respect to officers it has itself appointed. The method of government practised in the Apostolic Churches in many respects resembles that embodied in the civil constitution of England. All government here is based upon popular consent and control. It is only a strong and free people who will elect rulers over themselves, and offer them willing obedience. And that is the strongest and freest Church which can trust the people as the apostles trusted them, encouraging them to choose and elect the best among them for various offices and service, imposing upon them the responsibility of preserving purity in the ministry, faithfulness in the officials, healthfulness in the body politic, and being so educated to a noble Church life, as eventually to answer to the Saviour's ideal—"a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing" (Eph. v 27).

That the Churches throughout the early centuries of Christianity followed the practice initiated by the apostles may be proved by numberless quotations from the writings of the Fathers. Clement, Tertullian, Cyprian, Basil, and many others testify to this fact. Dr. Cave, chaplain to Charles II., after an exhaustive examination of the institutions of primitive Christianity, says, concerning the active use of the popular will in all Church appointments: "At all ordinations, especially of superior officers, the people of the place were always present, and ratified the action with their approbation and consent. And indeed it cannot be denied but that the people, in some places especially, were very much considered in this affair, it being seldom or never done without their presence and suffrage."¹

In accordance with the principles expressed in the life of the Apostolic Churches, the rules of the Methodist New Connexion guarantee to its members all the rights and privileges conferred by Divine authority upon believers from the beginning, in relation to Church order and arrangement, as will now be demonstrated.

In the appointment of a Leaders' Meeting, in the first instance, it must be chosen by the Church in conjunction with the minister.

¹ "Primitive Christianity," vol. i. p. 170.

Candidates for Church membership, after giving full satisfaction to the Leaders' Meeting of their entire fitness for reception into the Church, must be submitted for approval or otherwise to a meeting of the Church ; and if no objection be offered to them, they are to be publicly received wherever practicable, and commended to God with prayer and exhortation.

In appointing a leader a nomination is first made by the Leaders' Meeting, and then the name is submitted to the members of the class concerned, for confirmation or otherwise.

In the appointment of representatives to the Quarterly Meeting of the Circuit, nominations are first made in the Leaders' Meeting and then submitted to the Church Meeting for approval or otherwise.

Church Stewards are nominated by the Leaders' Meeting, and then submitted for election or otherwise to a meeting of the Church.

In the recommendation of any person for the ministry, it is required that the majority of a Church Meeting shall vote for the person proposed before the matter is taken to the Circuit Meeting.

Representative members of the Leaders' Meeting must be annually elected by a Church Meeting called for the purpose.

It cannot be supposed that either in the Methodist New Connexion, or any existing Church, there is a perfect reproduction of apostolic method and procedure. In many details there are differences from the early model. This, however, is rather an evidence of Christian liberty than unscripturalness. It is sufficient that essential principles are observed, and that minor details should be somewhat regulated by the various influences of time, locality, or civilisation. Some bodies of Christians have sought to copy with painful exactness the forms of early Christian salutation, the washing of each other's feet, the feasts of charity, &c.—customs which were mainly adopted from forms of Oriental life. This is to merge the spirit in the letter, to lose the essential in the circumstantial. The results in such cases have been far from encouraging, and have even led to

consequences of an unexpected character. But in regard to essential principles it can be sufficiently proved that the founders of the Methodist New Connexion sought to put ministers, officers, and members of the Church where they are put in the New Testament. The Divine right of the ministry both to rule and teach is rigidly guarded, the right of the people to be consulted and to have ultimate control of Church arrangements is secured, and an equitable and workable method of combining the ministerial and lay elements in Church life in all official courts has been discovered. These courts or assemblies must now be considered.

CHAPTER VI

CHURCH COURTS OR ASSEMBLIES

IN distinction from Congregationalism, which is based upon the theory that every congregation of believers is a Church independent of all others, and complete within itself for purposes of government, Connexionalism, which is virtually Presbyterianism, is framed upon the principle of Churches being associated for mutual help, and being governed by an ascending series of Church Courts. Presbyterianism is really government by representation, and this is embodied in the constitution of all its legislative meetings. The same principle is carried out in the Methodist New Connexion, with the addition of a fuller measure of power being vested in the Church Meeting.

The association of Churches under a common eldership may be fairly inferred to have Scriptural sanction if the conditions of some of the early Churches are considered. Doubtless some of these were isolated congregations, as the Church in the house of Aquila or Philemon. But in other cases where the word Church is used there were evidently a number of congregations included. The Church at Jerusalem is an instance. On the Day of Pentecost the result of Peter's appeal was : "They then that received His word were baptized : and there were added unto them in that day about three thousand souls" (Acts ii. 41). Immediately following this are the words : "And the Lord added to them day by day those that were being saved" (ver. 47). Not many days after this, a further marvellous addition to the Church was realised : "Many of them which heard the Word believed ; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand"

(iv. 4). This ingathering must have included large numbers of women also, as they generally constitute the majority in the membership of a Church. But yet more kept pressing into the fold: "And believers were the more added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women" (v. 14). Nor did the good work end with this; the Church expanded so rapidly that the apostles were unable to attend to all the work devolved upon them. Therefore came the appointment of seven deacons, and after their ordination followed a huge harvest of souls: "And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem exceedingly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith" (vi. 7). It should be also remembered that this glorious revival was not an evanescent excitement. For many years it not only preserved its living power, but in spite of persecution increased steadily. More than a quarter of a century had passed away, and Paul, accompanied by Luke, Aristarchus, and Trophimus, came to Jerusalem after many journeyings. There Paul recounted his struggles and victories. But James had also a story of Divine wonders to relate. "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands there are among the Jews of them which have believed" (xxi. 20). The words here rendered "thousands" are *posai myriades*, which literally means "how many myriads," or tens of thousands. Supposing this were a figure of speech, it yet was used to express an immense number of people who were in Jerusalem as witnesses for the grace of Christ. This being so, how could they all assemble as one congregation for nearly thirty years and preserve the vigour of Church life amongst themselves? Even if they had occasional mass meetings in the Temple porticoes, they must in that space of time have had some organisations for the convenience of believers in the various localities of the large city. These separate congregations were undoubtedly united as one Church, under a body of elders, who exercised jurisdiction over the whole. This did not preclude each congregation from having its own officials, for the collecting and distributing of the offertory and the management of its internal affairs. That there was a presbytery in Jerusalem which was com-

posed of the apostles and elders is clear from the narrative of what has been called the first Christian Council (Acts xv.) ; but which, although a Council, was far from being Ecumenical.

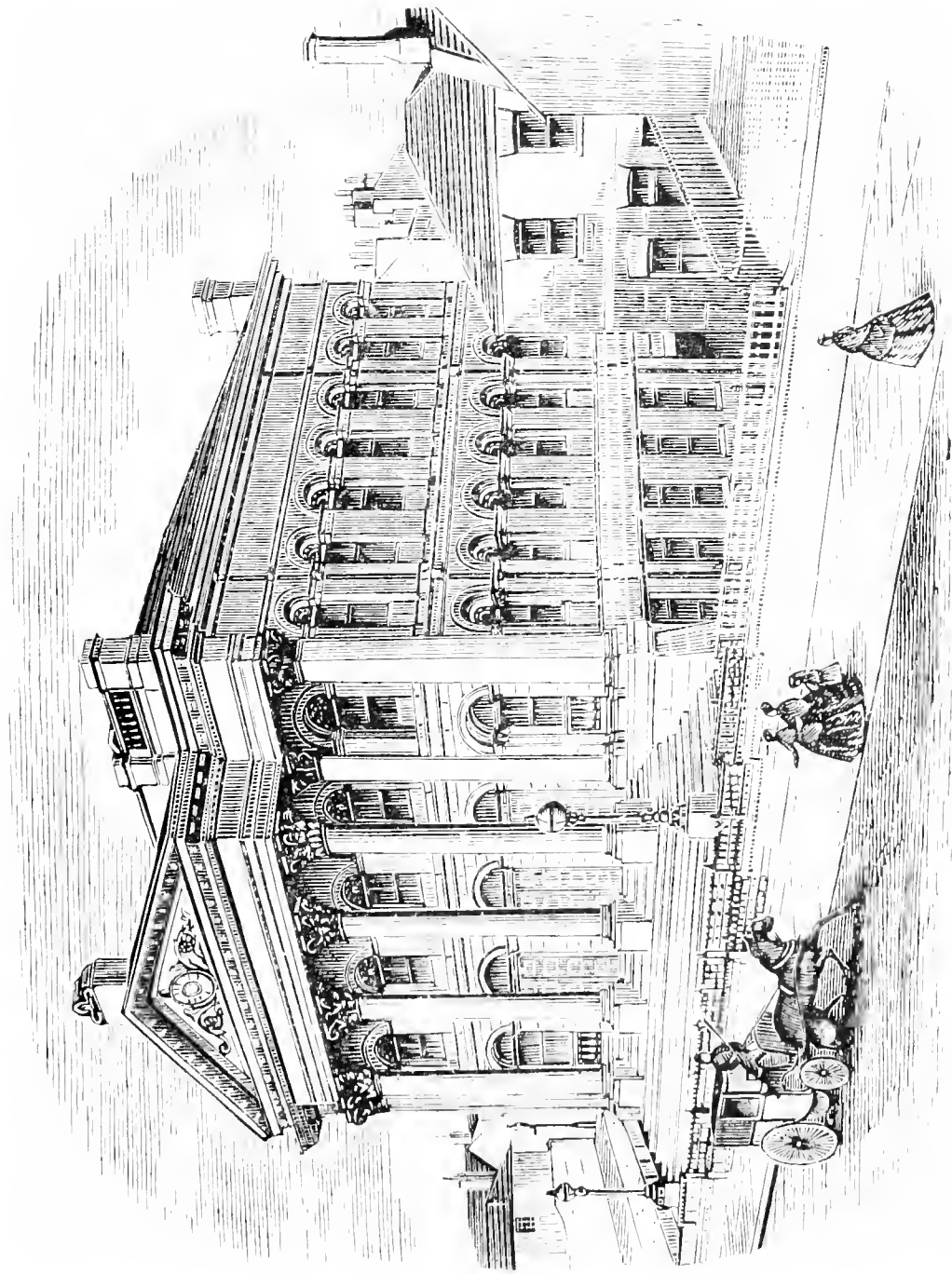
Much that has been advanced as to the plurality of congregations in Jerusalem would apply to other cities, especially to Rome, a brief reference to which must suffice for the present.

It would seem that years before Paul visited the great city there was a considerable Christian community within it, the origin of which probably was one of the results of the Day of Pentecost. Jews from Rome, who had gone up to the feast and had been converted there, upon returning to Rome had formed themselves into groups for Christian fellowship, and then as others gravitated to the centre of the empire the numbers swelled, especially when persecution broke up for a time the Church of Jerusalem and scattered the believers far and wide. Many of these, doubtless, would be found in Rome mingling with those who first of all had spoken the name of Jesus there. The following statements from the cautious pen of Bishop Lightfoot may be accepted as a probable view of the case.

“There was already (before the visit of St. Paul) a large and flourishing Church, a mixed community of Jew and Gentile converts, founded, it would seem, partly by his own companions and disciples, partly by teachers commissioned direct from Palestine and imbued with the strongest prejudices of their race ; a heterogeneous mass, with diverse feelings and sympathies, with no well-defined organisation, with no other bond of union than the belief in a common Messiah ; gathering, we may suppose, for purposes of worship in small knots here and there, as close neighbourhood or common nationality, or sympathy, or accident, drew them together ; but as a body lost in the vast masses of a heathen population, and only faintly discerned or contemptuously ignored even by the large community of Jewish residents.”¹

Before the death of Paul, and chiefly as the result of his incessant ministry, the Christians had multiplied in Rome amazingly. Converts had been won from the worshippers in

¹ “Philippians,” p. 13.



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the Jewish synagogues, soldiers of the Prætorian Guard had opened their hearts to the message of the gospel, members of the imperial palace had bowed before a greater name than that of Cæsar, many Christians had gravitated to the world's great centre and swollen the ranks of the believers, and multitudes of the enslaved and the poor had found in Christ unsearchable riches and glorious liberty. So rapid had been the growth of Christianity there that, in spite of all the caution observed by the Church to avoid arousing the spirit of opposition, the disciples could not be hid ; the powers of evil had their instincts of fear aroused, they were filled with apprehensions of danger from the enlarging host of God's elect, and the storm cloud of persecution gathered. Paul was the first victim of its wrath, but speedily the gardens and purlieus of the Emperor's palace were illuminated brilliantly by thousands of Christians being enwrapped in wool, then saturated with pitch, and consumed by fire, "butchered to make a Roman holiday."

From the circumstances of the case it must have been that the Christians in the city met for worship and sacramental observance in different localities, and that a uniting bond in the form of a presbytery must have maintained intercourse between the various gatherings, kept the larger communion open, and administered the general affairs of the Church. Only through such an instrumentality could efficient ministries be discharged or aggressive efforts carried out. All this was done and "the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed."

Out of the practice of Churches being grouped together in certain localities there grew the habit of holding meetings of various presbyteries to confer upon matters of supreme importance, such as questions of doctrine, or of missionary enterprise. Thus in course of time advisory or legislative courts were formed for Churches of large districts or even nations to assemble in, by their representatives, and pronounce upon subjects referred to them. The germ cell of these institutions seems to have been the Council held at Jerusalem recorded in Acts xv. Some persons from Jerusalem sought to infuse Judaising ideas into the minds of

the Christians of Antioch. Even Peter was found in sympathy with them, and Barnabas was led away by their dissimulation. Paul sought with his accustomed boldness to settle the point ; but in vain. It was therefore decided that he and Barnabas and some others should go up to Jerusalem and consult the apostles and elders on the question. The assembly to which the appeal was made seems to have been a large and influential one. It consisted of apostles, elders, and, in some capacity the members of the Churches of the district. It is written : "When they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the Church and the apostles and the elders" (xv. 4). The brethren were present at the deliberations of the council. "And all the multitude kept silence ; and hearkened unto Barnabas and Paul (ver. 12). They concurred also in the decisions of the assembly. "Then it seemed good to the apostles and elders, with the whole Church," &c. (ver. 22).

This first Council, constituted of apostles, elders, and brethren, developed into a presbyterial system of Church government, in which various congregations are united in groups, placed under several ecclesiastical Councils in an ascending scale, the higher with authority over the lower, in which the rights of all parties are honoured, the balance of power is held in equipoise, the ministerial and lay elements are harmonised, and a basis secured whereby all matters referred to them may be justly disposed of. As to the presence of both pastors and laymen in these Councils, Lord King has judicially pronounced, in his "Enquiry into the Primitive Church : " "As for the members that composed the synods, they were bishops, presbyters, deacons, and deputed laymen in behalf of the people of their respective Churches. Thus, at the great Synod of Antioch that condemned Paulus Samosatenus, there were present 'bishops, presbyters, deacons, and the Churches of God'—that is, laymen that represented the people of their several Churches. So also we read in an ancient fragment in Eusebius, that when the heresy of the Montanists was fixed and preached, 'the faithful in Asia met together several times to examine it, and upon examination condemned it.' So also when there were some heats in the Church at Carthage, about the restitution of the

lapsed, Cyprian writes from his exile, that the lapsed should be patient till God had restored peace to the Church, and then 'there should be convened a synod of bishops and of the laity who had stood firm during the persecution, to consider about and determine their affairs.' Which proposition was approved by Moses and Maximus, and other Roman confessors, who liked 'the consulting of a synod of bishops, presbyters, deacons, confessors, and the standing laity' And thus, at the great Council held at Carthage, anno 258, there were present eighty-seven bishops, together with presbyters, deacons, and a great part of the laity " ¹

The presbyterial system, which, as to its guiding principles, is sustained both by Scripture and early Church usage, commends itself in practice by its equitable and harmonious working. The principle of representation which pervades all civilised government which is worth the name, is embodied and exercised by it in its fairest form. If a civil community is desirous of framing its laws or conducting a wise system of self-government it can only do so by representation. This truth applies with double force in the life of a religious community. The deadening effect of the Popish ecclesiastical method of government, which is that of a hierarchical despotism, is noted by every historian and every observant traveller. The healthful and bracing influences of a representative form of ecclesiastical polity are manifest in the histories of many Protestant denominations. It provides the fairest, wisest, and purest mode for the impartial administration of law, of settling disputed questions, and of gathering up the forces of the Church for great enterprises.

This system, whilst securing to the pastorate its full share of power and influence, is the firmest barrier against clerical dominancy and sacerdotal encroachments. These things have advanced in the past only in proportion as the people have been excluded from their proper share in the government of their own Churches. The most sure defence against spiritual declension, doctrinal error, or priestly intolerance is for the Church to be self-governed, with a well-balanced system of representation as the foundation of its polity. By

¹ King's "Primitive Church," chap. viii. sect. 5.

this the rights of the people are preserved, the clerical and lay elements, instead of being in conflict, are mutually helpful, jealous of each other's rights, and vieing with each other in interchanges of honour and amity. Such is the testimony the Methodist New Connexion has to bear after its history of a century.

It is time that a brief review was made of the various Courts of the Connexion which this book memorialises. These are modelled largely upon the presbyterial method, and are all based upon the idea of well-balanced representation. The Church Meeting or Session has been already referred to and its prerogatives described. The other Courts, in ascending scale, are as follows :—

The Leaders' Meeting.—This is composed of the resident ministers, the church stewards, the leaders of classes, representatives of ministers' classes, of Christian Endeavours, and of those members who do not meet in class, but attend other meetings for Church fellowship. It is the business of this Meeting to periodically examine the Church roll ; to make arrangements for Divine worship ; to manage financial matters ; to visit the sick, the needy, and the careless ; to recommend members for reception into the Church, or for admission to the ministry ; to judge as to those who are fit for the local preachers' plan, and to generally superintend the work of the Church.

The Quarterly Meeting.—This is the Meeting of the Circuit, and consists of the ministers, Circuit stewards, local preachers' secretary, chapel and Sunday-school secretaries, missionary treasurer and secretary, with representatives from each Church in the Circuit. Each Circuit can fix its own scale of representation. This Meeting arranges for the maintenance of the ministers and their houses, examines candidates for the ministry or for the plan, and has charge both of the financial and spiritual affairs of the Circuit.

The District Meeting.—This Meeting is formed of all the ministers of the District, guardian representatives, Connexional officers, representatives from each Circuit, in numbers corresponding to the number of ministers and official members. The Meeting inquires into the con-

dition of the Churches, Sunday-schools, and Trusts, and prepares reports of these for the use of Conference. It collects the contributions for the Connexional Funds from each Circuit and forwards them to their various destinations ; it inquires into claims on the Connexional Funds, examines candidates for the ministry, reports upon any proposed division of a Circuit, and recommends measures to promote the spiritual life of the Circuits.

The Annual Conference.—This Assembly consists of an equal number of ministers and laymen (each Circuit electing a minister and a layman as its representatives) ; the officials of the various funds and institutions of the Denomination, and the guardian representatives, who are composed of an equal number of ministers and laymen. The Conference passes the laws of the Body, receives or excludes the ministers, distributes the funds of the departments, appoints the officials, stations the ministers, makes inquiry into the spiritual life of the Churches, and suggests means of progress.

The Annual Committee.—This is an executive appointed to act from Conference to Conference, and which deals with all business in the Connexion which is not touched by any of the regular departments. It gives effect to the decisions of the previous Conference, makes provision for exigencies in the ministry of the Churches, and exercises oversight of the whole Body

The chairman of these Meetings is invariably a minister when one is present. In the Conference every care has been taken to keep the balance between the ministerial and lay elements even, and this arrangement has given universal satisfaction to the whole Denomination. The departmental committees are constituted upon the same principle. The interest of all parties is thus maintained in the welfare of the institutions and the Connexional or family feeling kept fresh and vigorous.

In the main features of the polity, especially as to its association of the ministerial and lay elders in all its Church Courts, and the expression given to the voice of the people in all its appointments, the Methodist New Connexion stands side by side with all the Churches of the Reformation, with

the protesting Churches before the Reformation, with the leading Nonconformist Churches of Christendom ; but mostly it is thankful to believe that it has Scriptural sanction for the essential arrangements of its system. Such a polity, which has adopted for its basis the broad principle of popular representation, and trusts the people with the exercise of Church suffrages and control, is not opposed to pastoral rights, but secures them in the most satisfactory manner, and tends to lock the ministry and the people in bonds of mutual confidence and affection. In the history of the Connexion there has been an entire absence of jealousy or rivalry between these two constituent elements in the Denomination. On the other hand, an over satisfaction with a well-balanced and comprehensive system of government has, it may be feared, somewhat tended to interfere with the fervour of zeal which might have resulted in a greater enlargement of the Connexion.

But if the New Connexion has not grown so rapidly as its best friends might have desired, it has the satisfaction of knowing that the principles which it bore witness to from the beginning have been virtually embodied in the Church polity of every more recent denomination of Methodism, and that there is every probability that the Mother Church ere long will approximate so closely to them as to open the way to closer relationship. If the concessions already made in Wesleyan Methodism could have been conceded a hundred years ago, no secession would have taken place, and English Methodism might not have had any divisions in it to-day. Happily the divisions are of only minor importance ; there is no division of feeling—old bitternesses have long since perished, and it is the devout prayer of the New Connexion that the bonds of loving fellowship between the two bodies may grow more and more.

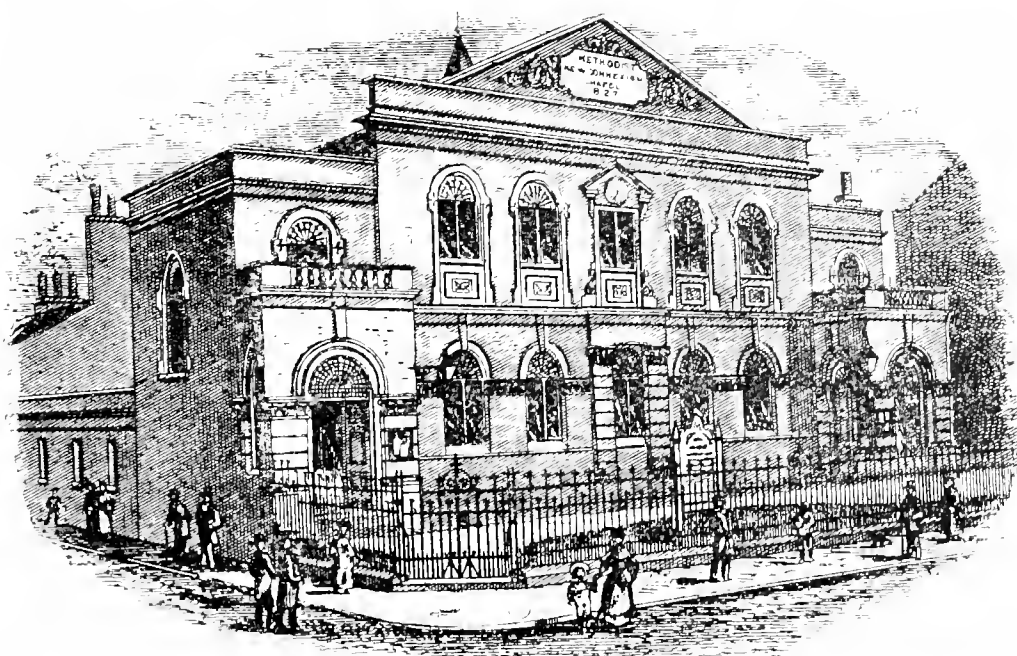
The extent to which the principles of the Connexion have been adopted by other Methodist bodies may be partly realised by the following statements :—

The Primitive Methodists were established in 1811. They embodied in their system all the characteristics of Methodist New Connexion polity, save that in their Con-

ference they gave a preponderance of representation to the laity.

The Wesleyan Association, which arose in 1835, and afterwards amalgamated with the Wesleyan Reformers who seceded in 1849, framed a constitution which placed ministers and laymen on a footing of co-ordinate authority, giving extreme expression to the democratic sentiment in Church life.

The Bible Christians arose in 1818 and adopted a system almost identical with that of the New Connexion, and have been blessed with much success in giving expression to their principles.



SOUTH STREET, SHEFFIELD.
(Centenary Conference, 1897.)

The Protestant Methodists of the United States, who arose in 1828, have followed almost precisely the lines of the New Connexion, and are a very powerful and admirable denomination.

The great Methodist Church of Canada, which, more than twenty years ago, gathered into itself all the scattered forces of Methodism in the Dominion, is based upon a system almost identical in every point with the New Connexion, and is a magnificent vindication of the success of its polity.

The immense Methodist Episcopal Churches of the United

States have also adopted the principle of lay representation, and alongside of the Methodism of Canada demonstrate the excellence of its working on a gigantic scale. These various denominations, every one of which professes and practices to a larger or smaller degree the principles of Church order, for which the founders of the New Connexion struggled, number more than *five millions* in Church membership. This means that about *twenty-five millions* of adherents are in association with the Churches which have approximated to the system of the first Methodist reformers.

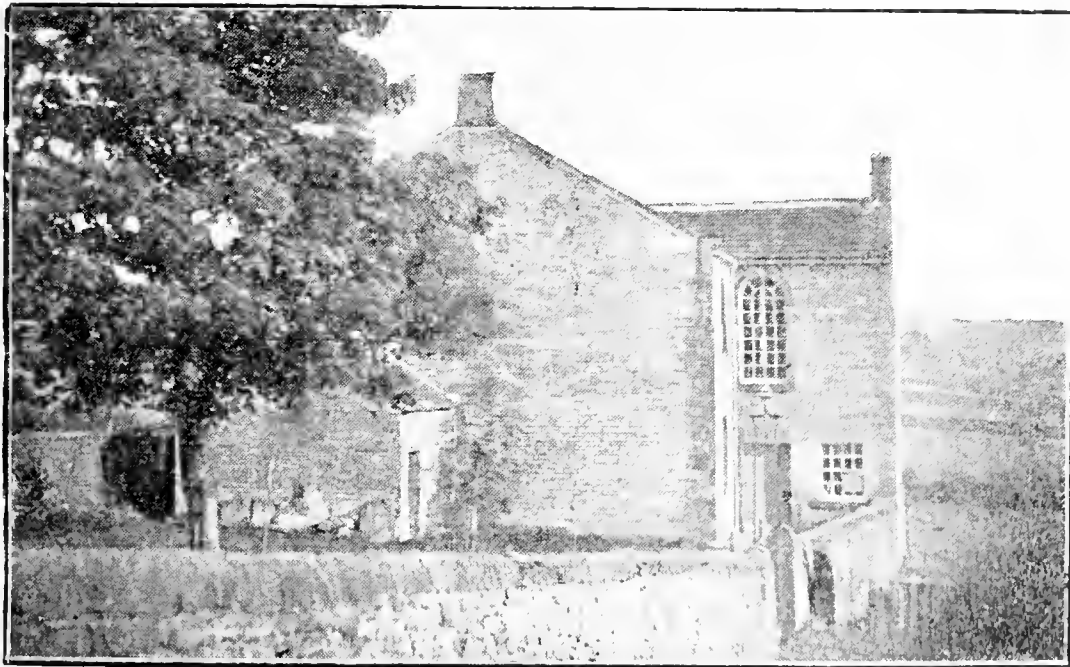
This brief restatement of the features of the polity of the Methodist New Connexion, which distinguish it from other Methodist denominations, is made without any desire to disturb the fraternal feeling which has been growing so happily among the branches of the Methodist family for some years past. Care has been taken to avoid any reference which could arouse one pang of bitterness in the mind of the most devoted of Wesley's sons. No reflection has been cast by implication even upon the successors of Mr. Wesley, who, in his removal, had confessedly a task of almost superhuman difficulty before them. No more delicate or intricate work ever was devolved upon a band of fallible men. The questions which, through Mr. Wesley's commanding influence, had been kept in abeyance, came up and demanded a settlement. Even as to some subjects which in themselves were, as they appear from this distant standpoint, easy of settlement, there were sharp dividing lines between those who were anxious to preserve the *status quo* on the one hand, and those who desired reform upon the other. Such were the questions as to worshipping during Church hours, and the administration of the Lord's Supper by Methodist ministers. So far as argument was concerned, these points could easily have been settled. But there were strong prejudices and predilections to be overcome before a peaceable solution of them could be reached. The whole situation was peculiarly trying; and unfortunately there was no man of commanding influence or of statesmanlike quality to guide the ship through perilous waters. If a man of Dr. Jabez Bunting's calibre had been to hand then Methodism might have had a

different history. All this should be considered in appraising the action of the Wesleyan Conference of those days. On the other hand there may well be made frank admission that if the reformers had been as cool in spirit and cautious in method as they were farsighted in purpose and wise in counsel, they might not have alienated some excellent but timorous men from their side, who forsook them in the time of strain, and they might have led to a peaceful solution of long vexed questions. But after a century has gone by, old grievances may well be buried. It is the universal desire of the New Connexion that the dead past should be forgotten, and that henceforth there should be nothing but brotherly fellowship between the parent and the child. There are many signs of such happy interchange of affection manifesting themselves, not the least satisfactory of which is the unanimous and enthusiastic adoption of a resolution by the last Wesleyan Conference to send a deputation to the ensuing Centenary Conference of the New Connexion to offer the kindly greetings of the Mother Church to its eldest born. That this was no mere conventionalism is evident from the character of the deputation, which consists of the Rev T B. Stephenson, D.D., not only a minister of highest rank in his Denomination, but famed throughout Christendom as one of the leading philanthropists of the day, and Mr. Percy T Bunting, not only a distinguished *litterateur*, but grandson of Dr. Jabez Bunting, the most enlightened and far-seeing statesman Methodism ever produced. The occasion of their visit, by the consecrating power of the Holy Spirit, will be the signal that any lingering feeling of coolness between the two denominations has vanished, and that an era has dawned of gracious and lasting unity.

It is matter for profound thankfulness that the questions which have divided the two bodies have been only those of Church polity. These are undoubtedly of great importance, but they do not rank highest of all. The more living and essential subjects of doctrine, worship, sacramental observance, and Church ordinances have been preserved in their original integrity by all Methodist denominations. As to the retention of sound doctrine, the Methodist New Connexion

fifty-five years ago was subjected to a fiery ordeal such as was never passed upon any other Methodist body. The most popular minister in its ranks, a man of extraordinary ability, and possessed of consummate art in dealing with the masses, arose and taught false doctrine, drawing after him an immense following. With unfaltering loyalty to truth, ministers and laymen united to extrude him from their midst, and the step was taken at a cost of one-quarter of the entire membership of the body. No proof could have been given by any denomination more demonstrative of its firm attachment to the great saving truths of the gospel which it has always been the joy of Methodism to proclaim. Equally firm has been the attachment of the New Connexion to all its best traditions. It has ever cherished a devout gratitude for the marvellous providence manifested in numberless ways in the origin and history of Methodism. It has delighted to trace the Divine Hand in the development of its ordinances and institutions. In all the signs of Divine favour vouchsafed to early Methodism, both in delivering it from persecution and in showering prosperity upon its enterprises, it has felt that it has had a share, and it has sought to make suitable acknowledgment to its Almighty Friend. It has guarded with jealousy the essential characteristics of Methodist life, and liberally supported by its substance the spiritual ordinances which differentiate Methodism from other denominations. The Hymn Book of the New Connexion is more thoroughly Wesleyan than is the hymnal of the Parent Body. This may not be considered an improvement, as many hymns are thereby included which are scarcely worthy of the Wesleys ; but it is an evidence of the strong clinging to whatever bore the stamp of Wesley which actuated the compilers. The idea of spiritual fellowship, which is so clear a mark of a really Scriptural Church, and which was so admirably enshrined in the class meeting, has been carefully cultivated ; and where the class meeting itself has somewhat decayed, it has sought to revive its essential features in forms more modern but not less spiritual. It has laboured earnestly to honour the Saviour's last command, to go into all the world and disciple the nations. Therefore, both at home, in the

Colonies, and in the great foreign field of China, it has maintained aggressive work. It contributed about thirty thousand adherents to the united Methodism of Canada when the various bodies merged themselves in one, and it has made some contribution to the practically united Methodism of Australasia. Its literature has been impressed with a true Methodist imprimatur, its doctrines, sentiments, and indescribable aroma of holy fervour breathing through all its productions. It has ever held out the hand of fellowship to the Churches of Evangelical



SHELLEY, HUDDERSFIELD.

(Built 1785.—The oldest chapel in the Connexion.)

Protestantism, but the hand-clasp has been the heartiest and the greeting warmest when extended to the ministers or members of other Methodist denominations. Such is the prayerful greeting it would offer to all the bodies of Methodism in this the time of its rejoicing, that they may prosper as did the vine of Joseph with its branches running over the wall.

Nothing can be more fitting than to close this section of the Centenary Volume by reproducing the words with which the venerable Rev. Thomas Allin concluded his portion of the Jubilee Volume in 1846 :—

“ Here then is a system, which with the enlarged spiritual views of Methodism—its religious ordinances—its diversified instrumentality—and its wholesale discipline, combines a mode of government which secures order without despotism, and liberty without licentiousness ;—the efficiency of the ministry and the privileges of the people ;—and which by uniting all classes of the community in the bond of common privileges and interests, removes those causes of discontent, contention, and separation which, among a people otherwise free, must always exist in connection with a spiritual despotism however distinguished or modified.”

W. J. Townsend



HISTORICAL SKETCH

OF THE

METHODIST NEW CONNEXION

REV T. D. CROTHERS, D.D.

CHAPTER I

1797—1822

METHODISM fills a large place among the great Protestant Churches of modern Christendom. The evidence is abundant that it came from Heaven and had a place prepared for it of God. Its simple origin, rapid progress, and great expansion, viewed in connection with its essential character and the circumstances amidst which it has prevailed, testify to its association with power from on high. At the beginning of the last century it was not born, and there was no presage of its birth; at the end of this century few parts of the globe are ignorant that it lives or are insensible of its power. Small and seemingly feeble at first, without worldly helps of any kind, not only unhelped but much and variously hindered, it yet advanced and triumphed over formidable obstacles—advanced till adversaries have found it useless to resist it, and it now stands forth a stable system of faith and worship and evangelistic agency, sustained by twenty-five millions of members and adherents, employing its representatives in nearly all countries, multiplying without ceasing its facilities for yet wider diffusion,

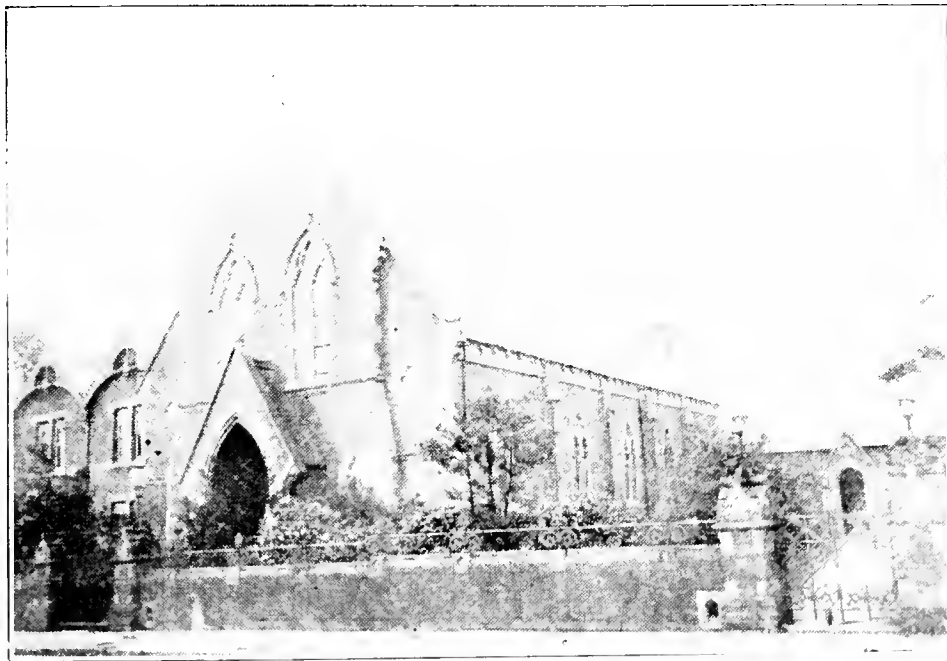
and hopefully aiming, in fellowship with similar systems, at nothing less than the subjugation of the whole world to the Saviour.

In all great religious movements a multitude of co-workers may be seen accepting the inspiration and leadership of a few. Wycliffe, Luther, Calvin, Knox, played prominent parts, for which they were fitted by gifts of nature and providential training; and so in the Methodist Revival the Wesleys, Whitefield, Coke, Asbury, and many others were prepared commanders of the people. Among the chiefs whose commission the people willingly recognised, an illustrious pre-eminence belongs to John Wesley. The prosperity of the work which he was honoured to originate raised him to a position which he could never have foreseen, and gave him a domination over his societies which was mild and paternal, but absolute. That rulership, whilst favouring the ecclesiastical prejudices of his education, was subject to one constant check—love for his preachers and people. Much as he valued Church order, he valued the spiritual mission committed to him more. It is this principle or rule which accounts for the obvious discrepancies of his career. He did not intend his followers to separate from the Established Church; he was unwilling that they should become a distinct organisation of their own; but when by the necessities of the widening work he was pressed time after time to choose between giving up his wishes and scattering the societies, he yielded to the pressure and took steps for the continuance and development of the societies. It has been pleasantly said of him that, while he kept his eye on the Church, yet, like a rower on the Thames with his eye on St. Paul's, each stroke carried him practically further away from it.

Wesley's death was immediately followed by years of upheaval. The supreme power which Wesley had exercised had been legally vested in the Conference, or Legal Hundred, but his personal influence could not be transferred; and when Progressives and Conservatives with equal zeal asserted claims which had been held in abeyance during the founder's lifetime, how to adjust or dispose of the demands was not a problem of easy solution for the Hundred, whose ideas tended to fixity

rather than progress, yet who could not possibly keep things as they were. Controversies spread throughout the three kingdoms respecting the right of the people to hold religious services in Church hours, and to receive the sacraments in their own chapels and from the hands of their own ministers; but the main dispute had reference to the right of the people to participate in the spiritual and secular government of Church affairs. It was by active advocacy of these rights, and of the liberal principles on which they stand, that Mr. Kilham first acquired distinction.

The Rev Alexander Kilham was born at Epworth, in



ALEXANDER KILHAM MEMORIAL, EPWORTH.

Lincolnshire, the birthplace of the Wesleys, July 10, 1762. His parents were serious Methodists, and his early training was strictly religious. But he broke away from its restraints, and for some years stoutly resisted the voice of conscience. He was converted when about eighteen years of age through the example and efforts of relatives and companions who had turned to God in a revival in Epworth. After praying for some hours in a religious meeting surrounded by his believing friends, he experienced a powerful sense of Divine favour. "I found," he writes, "a sudden change in my mind. I could not weep if I might have had the world for it; but I found a great love

to every one around me, and my heart was filled with unspeakable joy. I did not know what had passed within me, only that my heart was changed from mourning to rejoicing." He began almost at once to assist in meetings for prayer and exhortation, united with the Methodist Society, and became conscious of an impulse toward the ministry. He preached his first sermon at Luddington, with effects which encouraged him to proceed. Shortly afterwards he became a travelling assistant to Mr. Brackenbury, and went with him to various parts of England and to the Channel Islands, welcoming instruction from his cultivated master, and as a son with a father serving with him in the gospel. In July, 1785, he was accepted by Mr. Wesley as one of the preachers, and stationed in Horncastle Circuit. In 1786 he was removed to Gainsborough Circuit, where zeal in his work impelled him to excessive toil, which injured his health, and compelled him to rest for a time. In the third year of his probation he was stationed at Scarborough, and during his stay there he married Miss Sarah Gray, an intelligent and affectionate lady who brought him a moderate income, which helped him to cope with the difficulties besetting his contention for reform, occasioned by costly postal charges and defective means of communication. During the next two years his circuits were Pocklington and Whitby. In 1791, a few months after Wesley's death, he was removed to Newcastle-on-Tyne, where he entered on the course of controversy which issued in his expulsion in 1796. He wrote in defence of his Superintendent, Rev. Joseph Cownley, who had been attacked for giving the Lord's Supper to members who had requested to receive it at his hand. For publishing an address on the subject, a majority of the Conference of 1792 passed upon him a formal censure. In 1793 he was appointed to Aberdeen, where he spent two years. During his stay in Scotland he saw the working of the Presbyterian system, and was confirmed in regarding a well-ordered conjunction of ministry and laity in Church government and discipline as Scriptural, wise, and just. By the Conference of 1795 he was entrusted with the direction of the Alnwick Circuit. Here in the autumn he published a pamphlet entitled "The Progress of Liberty," in which eccle-

siastical absolutism was assailed, the right of the people to share in legislation and government maintained, and the outlines of a constitution intended to remedy disorders submitted for consideration. At the instigation of some influential London preachers, the Chairman of the Newcastle District cited Mr. Kilham to answer for this publication before a special District Meeting, which Court decided to refer the case to Conference. At the Conference, which met in London on Monday, July 25, 1796, the case came up as soon as possible for trial and determination. Charges based on passages from several of Mr. Kilham's writings were examined, and his replies considered. The Conference then unanimously voted the extreme penalty of expulsion.

It would be misleading to represent the expulsion of Mr. Kilham as consequent on formal condemnation by the Conference of the principles for which he contended. On the other side, there is not warrant to say that dislike of those principles or dread of their operation did not impel the decision. In reference to the scope and mode of the investigation, the following historical remarks appear to claim attention :—

“The Conference of 1796 had now arrived. London was the place of meeting, and Mr. Thomas Taylor, formerly Mr. Kilham's supporter, was elected President. The trial came on, but no charge was alleged impugning his moral conduct, his religious sentiments, his efficiency as a minister, or his zeal and diligence in the discharge of his duties ; nor was any attempt made to disprove the reasonableness, the justice, or the Scriptural character of those reforms which he had advocated. Discussion on these topics was, indeed, precluded, first by a formal inquiry as to whether he had not on his reception as a preacher into full connexion given a pledge to abide by the Minutes and Rules of which he had received a copy, and secondly, whether or not it was his intention to abide by them.

No trial was instituted respecting principles, but several passages detached from their context were selected from his writings and made the basis of charges against him. Mr. Kilham desired a copy of those charges, but was refused. Though he pressed for them in order that he might give them his best

consideration and be able to prepare his defence, he was refused. Though he promised not to copy a line of them, he was still refused. It is just to observe, however, that what the Conference itself unrighteously withheld the Rev. Adam Clarke voluntarily and privately supplied.”¹

The details of the trial and of the complicated contests out of which it sprang obviously could not be even summarised within the limits of this short sketch. Any who desire fuller information relative to Mr. Kilham and the treatment he received may be referred to the works specified below.²

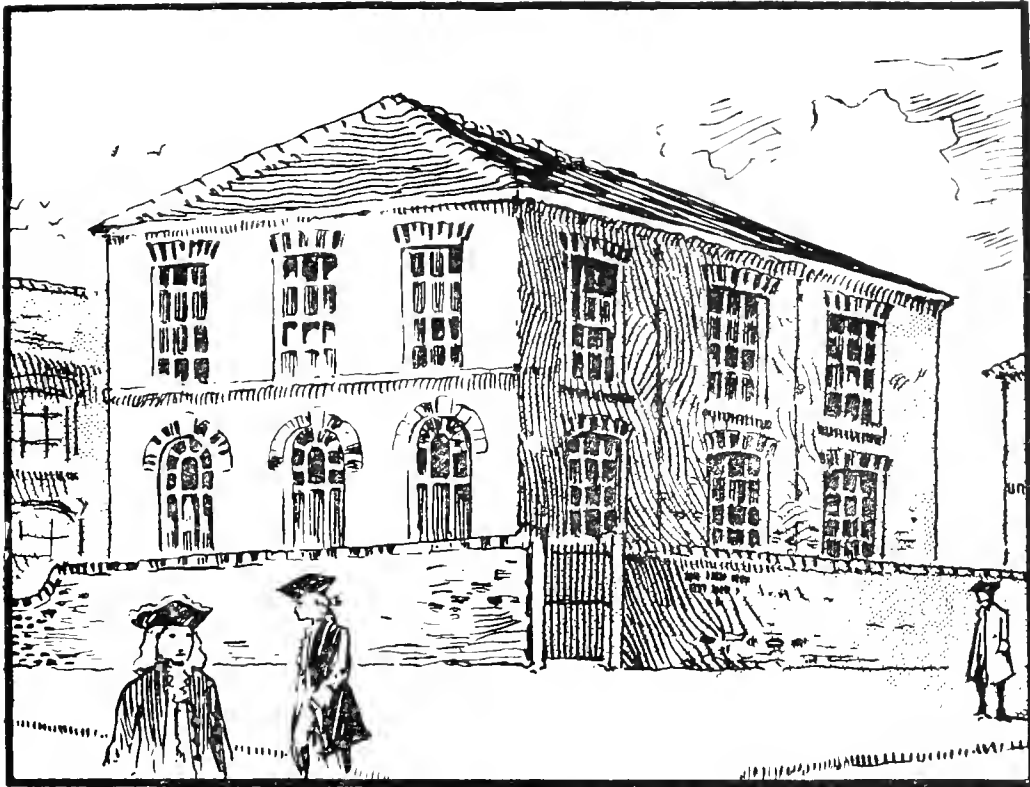
After his exclusion Mr. Kilham, who did not consider himself conclusively dismissed from the Connexion, but hoped that concessive changes might open the way to his return, published an account of his trial, started a periodical for exposition and defence of his views, entitled the *Methodist Monitor*, and on the invitation of sympathisers visited many places, where he both preached the Word and lectured on Church principles. He contented himself with trying to find acceptance for the reforms he thought necessary, not making any endeavour to set up a new community. At length, however, it became clear to him, as well as to those who shared his convictions, that the concessions which they sought would probably be refused, and that steps should be taken to prepare for the breach that appeared imminent. In the spring of 1797 a chapel, in which a Baptist congregation had worshipped—Ebenezer, Leeds—was on sale, and some friends in Leeds having purchased it, Mr. Kilham preached the opening sermon on the 5th of May. The short preface to the sermon, which was published by request, offers a luminous exposition of the objects intended: “The managers of the chapel will cheerfully unite with the Conference next July if they will grant them the privileges they have the right to claim. If the preachers should determine to oppose their measures and resolve to rule without their interference, they will follow the

¹ Cooke's “First Methodist Reformer,” p. 28.

² Blackwell's “Life of Rev. A. Kilham,” 1838; Jubilee Volume of the Methodist New Connexion, 1848; Dr. Townsend's “Alexander Kilham,” 1889.

openings of Divine Providence and commit their cause to the Lord. No men under heaven can be more firmly attached to the cause of Methodism than the persons who have purchased this place. But they are firmly persuaded that religious liberty is the birthright of every Englishman, and that they, as members of the Methodist Society, have a right to all the privileges which the gospel offers."

The Conference of 1797 met at Leeds, where also assembled about seventy trustee-delegates and others, with a view to



EBENEZER, LEEDS.
(*First Conference 1797.*)

obtain new or altered regulations by which various causes of dissatisfaction might be removed. It is unnecessary to describe the complaints which the delegates urged in relation to Bristol affairs, the accounts of Kingswood, the yearly collection, and other similar matters, or to notice the answering decisions of Conference; these transactions having little or nothing to do with the narrative. The vital principle lying at the root of the dissension was lay representation; and the questions of chief interest are, whether the people's right to representation was explicitly claimed, and how, if made, the

claim was responded to. The facts are these : "Three different representations on the subject of lay representation were successively submitted to Conference, but they were all negatived. The first proposition was that two or more lay representatives from each District Meeting should be admitted into Conference to co-operate with the preachers in transacting the general business of the Connexion. This was rejected by the Conference. The second proposition submitted was that representatives might be admitted into the District Meetings to unite with the ministers in the general business of each district respectively. This proposition also the Conference rejected. The third measure proposed by the delegates was that representatives should be sent from the different circuits to the place where the Conference was held, but to meet in an apartment by themselves and thus constitute a second House of Legislature, somewhat like the House of Commons, and that no new law or alteration should be rendered valid unless approved by this Lay Convention. Such a method of transacting business would no doubt have involved inconveniences, but, more favourable measures being rejected, the delegates had recourse to this final plan in order to secure the peace of the Connexion and prevent a division. This proposition, was, however, rejected by the Conference. Some modifications were indeed made in the laws or usages respecting financial matters, and the reception and expulsion of members and the appointment of officers ; but in respect to holding special meetings by the people to consider abuses or send petitions to Conference, there was an actual abridgment of the privileges which usage had previously given to the people, for these meetings were now restricted by such conditions as rendered them all but impracticable—in fact, the power to hold such meetings was *virtually* taken away."¹

When the final resolution of Conference not to admit laymen into the District Meeting and the Conference became known, a number of those who had been attending the meeting of delegates and of others of like convictions came together and agreed to address to Conference an official notification that they had made conditional provision for a

¹ *Vide* Jubilee Volume, pp. 106, 107.

new itinerancy in substantial accord with the elements of a constitution laid down in "The Progress of Liberty," and that they must give effect to their plans if no method of reconciliation could be found. The President replied that the letter had been read in the Conference, and that the "Articles of Pacification" enclosed, the insufficiency of which has just been stated, was the answer.

All hope of necessary reform having now passed away, those who felt obliged to leave the Old Connexion, including Revs. William Thom, Stephen Eversfield, and others, proceeded to form a New Connexion, differing from the Old, not with respect to doctrines or modes of worship or means of grace, but solely with respect to discipline, the relative rights and responsibilities of ministers and people.

On the 9th of August, 1797, the small band of ministers and laymen—in all fifteen or seventeen persons—assembled in Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, and with prayer for guidance and blessing constituted the memorable First Conference of the Methodist New Connexion, called for a time the New Itinerancy. The Rev. W. Thom was appointed President, and the Rev. A. Kilham, Secretary. Such arrangements as were practicable were made to provide preachers for places where friends had declared themselves favourable to the new association. Alphabetically given, the appointments were : Hanley Circuit, Mr. Grundell ; Leeds, Huddersfield, &c., Mr. Thom ; Liverpool, Messrs. Cummins and Mallinson ; Manchester, &c., Mr. Mort ; North Shields, Mr. Eversfield ; Sheffield, Mr. Kilham. Epworth and Nottingham, while recognised as circuits, were not supplied. The Conference also adopted the basis of a Constitution, embracing the principles already affirmed, leaving the scheme to be revised and developed by the next and succeeding Conferences after mature deliberation.

At Whitsuntide, 1798, the Conference was held at Sheffield, when, as before, Rev. W. Thom was chosen President, and Rev. A. Kilham, Secretary. It was constituted of fifteen ministers and seventeen lay representatives. Most of the regulations which Messrs. Thom and Kilham had been requested to formulate and lay before the societies, with a view to acceptance or otherwise, were adopted and became a

permanent part of the denominational polity. The Yearly Collection, afterwards named the Contingent Fund, was originated this year, to enable the Conference to meet extraordinary and contingent expenses. The Book Room also was instituted at the same time for the purpose of supplying the Connexion with hymn-books and other publications, and by its authority a denominational magazine was commenced in January, 1798, at the price of sixpence monthly.

Distinguished sons of the Church are often removed from earth to heaven without having time to witness the full working of schemes which they have inaugurated. It is probable the progress of the Connexion would have been greater had Mr. Kilham been permitted to plan and work in its behalf for a full lifetime. It was natural, therefore, that under apparent exigencies his early death should be mourned as a great misfortune. There can be no doubt that his life was shortened by exertions and cares disproportioned to his strength. His work after the formation of the Connexion was more exhaustive than ever, great as it had previously been. The position of authority which he held devolved upon him large correspondence, long and toilsome journeys, and other duties, besides his ordinary but ceaseless circuit engagements. His longing to be useful would not suffer him to slacken his speed. "The people," he writes, "beg of me to spare myself, but how is it possible, when the harvest is so white already?" Exposure in severe weather during a toilsome journey in Wales hastened the end. His last illness began on December 12th. Eight days after, distressing pain in the left breast, followed by hemorrhage, indicated that a blood-vessel had been ruptured, and that he could not recover. After a violent attack, as soon as he was able to speak, he said, "I am going to my Redeemer; I shall mount up with wings as eagles"; and again, "If I am dying now, tell all the world that Jesus is precious." His whole soul appeared to be filled with Divine power while he spoke, and he added, "He is working gloriously in my heart, glory be to God"; and a little later, "As the afflictions of Christ abound His consolations abound in my soul." Life was now ebbing fast when he said, "What I have done in

regard to the Methodist Connexion, so far from repenting, I rejoice in at this moment." The last words he was heard to speak were, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." So died unto the Lord, on December 20, 1798, at the age of thirty-six, the faithful and devoted Kilham.

Two months afterwards the Connexion was bereaved of one of the honoured few whose lives belong to the early history of our cause at Hanley. God blessed Mr. William Smith with success in business and with generosity in the use of its gains. He was popular as a local preacher, and instrumental in the salvation of many. With settled convictions on Church polity, he took a leading part in the struggle which was made for freedom. Shortly before the separation, Hanley Society, among others, resolved to petition Conference "to adopt such measures as should conciliate the people and make the interest of preachers and people one"; one of the things contained in the petition being this: "That one preacher and one lay delegate, chosen by the people from each circuit or district, should compose the Conference, each having equal power in the transaction of all business." The moment it had been voted that this and like concessions should be asked, the presiding preacher declared that all who had then voted, comprising nearly all the leaders and stewards, no longer belonged to the body. Surely this was summary jurisdiction. The petition was, nevertheless, taken to the Conference of 1797 by Mr. Smith, who had been delegated to present it, but it was cast out. When every hope of accommodation was destroyed, Mr. Smith immediately united with the Methodist New Connexion and opened his house for Divine service till a more suitable place was prepared. A protracted illness metened him for the inheritance of saints. A short time before his death, at his own request, he was carried to the new sanctuary and into the pulpit, where he prayed aloud with affecting fervour that God would bless the labours of His servants in the conversion of many thousands of souls in that place; that it would please God to bless the Christian brethen whom he was going to leave behind; that He would give them many happy and glorious days, and make them as Mount Zion, a praise and a bulwark

in the earth. He died, in the full assurance of faith, on February 20, 1798, at the early age of thirty-five.

A concise chronological list of miscellanea may give a juster view of the early occurrences of this first period than would a mere general statement. In 1799 the President of Conference was the Rev. J. Grundell, and the Secretary Mr Robert Hall, of Nottingham. The Conference Roll included a representation of members of the Connexion in Ireland and the Rev John M'Clure was appointed to Lisburn. Most of the preachers assembled paid half a guinea as their first subscription towards a fund for the support of superannuated ministers and the widows of ministers. It was resolved that members of Society might occupy the gallery of the Conference chapel during discussions of a public character. A new hymn-book, compiled from various sources, was published as a supplement to the Wesleyan Hymn Book. In 1800 it was determined that the Annual Committee and the Stationing Committee should be chosen by ballot. The Conference in 1801 recommended the societies to establish circulating libraries composed of pious and edifying books for the instruction of any who might be disposed to use them. A committee of three persons was appointed by the Conference of 1802 to collect, revise, and put in order the laws and rules and to report. In 1802 also the Paternal Fund was established, to enable the Conference, in harmony with the method of itinerancy, to appoint married ministers to Circuits without respect to the varying requirements of their families an allowance being made from the Fund towards the support of every child until a certain age had been reached. Circuits with limited numbers and resources were thereby made in this respect as eligible spheres for labour as larger and abler circuits. At the Conference of 1803 the Beneficent Fund was founded. This Fund was instituted to make some provision for supernumerary ministers unable to continue in circuit service through affliction or advanced age, and also to relieve the widows of ministers; its resources being drawn from the payments of members in active service and from collections and subscriptions, grants and bequests. Among the donations which aided its commencement was one of

£50 from its first treasurer, Mr. S. Heginbotham. The Conference of 1805 advised persons desirous of uniting with the community to supply themselves with the rules, that they might become acquainted with the discipline and be able to judge of its accordance with Scripture. In the *Magazine* for January, 1807, appeared short memoirs of Mr. T. Hannam, by whom the first four volumes of the periodical were prepared and issued. A volume of "Outlines of Sermons" on miscellaneous subjects, and two other volumes of similar character, styled the "Analytical Compendium," were products of Mr. Hannam's research and diligence, which were favourably received by the public.

In the Minutes of 1808 are recorded the deaths of the Rev. Chás. Donald and the Rev. James Parry. The all-conquering power of the Cross was remarkably illustrated in the conversion and subsequent useful ministry of Mr. Donald. On leaving his Presbyterian home he was led away by companions into vicious courses. Having journeyed from the North to Leeds in search of work and finding none, in order to buy bread he sold the Bible and some other books which his father had given him. Bitterly did he rue in after days having parted with these treasures. Privation did not stop his downward progress. He ran into such excess that an unprejudiced informant had to say, "I thought him at that time one of the greatest adepts in wickedness, considering his years, I had ever known." But the saving mercy of God wrought in him a glorious change. During a revival at Wortley a sermon from the striking words, "And the iron did swim," arrested him, and filled him with repentant thought and purpose. Constrained by a love stronger than sin, he became a prayer leader, an exhorter, and an acceptable local preacher. The report of his conversion, and especially of his preaching, awakened as much surprise at Alnwick, where he was known, as at Wortley. "Charles Donald is converted, and they say he is preaching!" excitedly exclaimed one who had worked with him during his apprenticeship. "Well," said the person informed, "what cannot the grace of God do!" Mr. Donald was a member of the Armley Society till the Conference of 1798

called him into the ministry. In all his Circuits he was cordially received and highly esteemed. At Huddersfield he was extremely popular. But the eagerness of the people to hear him caused him to exert himself with injurious vehemence. It was on an exciting occasion, "when the chapel was full to overflowing and the people hung with breathless attention on the preacher's lips, that he made a sudden pause, and then said in a low tone, as if soliloquising, 'But I fancy I hear some one saying, "Charles, Charles, spare thyself;"' to which he immediately replied in most impassioned tones: 'What! spare thyself! no, never, never! No, never, in such a cause as this!' And then he went off again with warnings, appeals, invitations, and remonstrances the most powerful and touching. The effect was overwhelming." He laboured next at Hull, where sustained increase in attendance made enlargement of the chapel necessary. From Hull he was removed to Dewsbury. But his constitution was injured beyond repair. He preached but a few months before he was laid entirely aside. A young man who had been drawn to Christ by his instrumentality, standing by his sick bed, said to him, "I shall be a star in your crown." With characteristic frankness, tempered by the kindest feeling, he replied, "Never mind my crown; take care of thy own." Thousands followed his remains to their resting-place near what was called Old Bank Chapel, near Buxton Road, Huddersfield. His son, Charles James Donald, entered our ministry and walked in his steps.

James Parry, who was received on trial in 1803, is delineated as a young man of very promising abilities, of amiable and affectionate disposition, and of most ardent and exalted piety. Endowed with an imagination of great strength and with admirable powers of expression, his ministry, though confined to a few years, excited high expectations which, however, were disappointed through the failure of his health. The last months of a trying illness were marked by serene faith and holy fortitude. "Just before his departure he lifted up his hands, while a Divine joy enlivened his countenance, and said, 'Jesus is all in all; the Lord is my portion.'" He entered into the joy of his Lord June 20, 1808.

The Conference of 1808 enacted the law which requires a minister on trial at the end of his probation to attend Conference that he may publicly answer questions relating to his conversion to God, subsequent religious experience, call to the office of the ministry, and doctrinal beliefs. In 1809 the Annual Committee was increased to the number of five, and times fixed for its ordinary meetings. In the spring of 1811 a measure was brought into Parliament by Lord Sidmouth which threatened the continuance of the rights secured to Nonconformists under the Act of Toleration. The vigorous opposition organised against the proposed obnoxious Bill was signally successful. The Address to the Connexion this year noted the danger which had been averted, and thankfully acknowledged the favour of Providence in the rejection of the insidious measure.

The obituary record of the Conference of 1812 commemorates the character, the services, and the death of the Rev. Wm. Thom, "who," it states, "may justly be considered a father in our ministry and one of the greatest advocates and ornaments of the Connexion." He was born at Aberdeen in 1751. His literary tastes and general mental bent were those of his country. He improved his schooldays well, and showed his ability as a mathematician and in the Latin and Hebrew languages. In 1774 he began to travel in the Old Connexion, and had the happiness to see much good done in his successive circuits. Mr. Wesley indicated his esteem for him by including him while comparatively young in the Legal Hundred. There was nothing rash or precipitate in his conduct; he always acted with cool deliberation. On the subjects of Church government his sentiments were carefully formed and gradually matured. In 1795 he was one of the fifty-eight preachers who signed an Address to the Conference protesting against defects in the Articles of Pacification, and urging that the ambiguity of the wording of some of them should be removed. In 1797, when he saw that the views which he held were disowned and withstood by the Conference, he felt himself obliged to declare that he must withdraw and act in unison with those of the people whose sentiments agreed with his own. In his ingenuous and temperate letter

of resignation he says : " I feel no desire to reflect on any of the brethren who differ from me. I believe they act in sincerity with their own principles, and may be useful to those who agree with them. I love and respect many of them with whom I have long been acquainted, and part with great reluctance. I am determined neither to make the pulpit or the press the vehicle of abuse ; but if I should be called upon to speak to the point in controversy among us I shall press into the service of the cause arguments drawn from Scripture and the primitive customs of the Church of Christ." As already stated, Mr. Thom was elected to the chair of our first Annual Conference in 1797, and on five subsequent occasions he was chosen to the presidency. Foresight, discretion, manly self-reliance, and general capacity for business marked him out for the work which he did—the principal part of the work of founding the Connexion. In 1803 he was appointed Book Steward and made a permanent member of Conference. He presided over the sessions of the Chester Conference in 1811, which was the last he attended. Much peace and hope brightened the months of his final affliction. He finished his course with joy in the house of a friend at Hanley on December 16, 1811.

Another name disappears from the ministerial roll at the Conference of 1812. During the preceding autumn the Rev. Richard Watson, after eight years of service, resigned his ministry in the Connexion, and returned to the Wesleyan body, which he had left because of unjust imputations of heresy. On his retirement from the Wesleyan ministry Mr. Watson turned himself to business, but his plans seemed to miscarry ; and after the lapse of about two years, during which period he joined the Methodist New Connexion, he was led to become a local preacher, and then to offer himself for the itinerancy of the Denomination. The soundness of his doctrinal views having been clearly ascertained, in 1803 he was accepted as a circuit minister and stationed at Stockport. He was next appointed to Manchester, then to Liverpool, and then to Manchester a second time. The selection of those populous towns as the places of his ministry is proof of the high esteem with which he was regarded. That

esteem was also evidenced by the offices conferred upon him. Once he was elected a member of the Annual Committee, and three times he was chosen Secretary of Conference. It is a satisfaction at this distance of time thus to see that neither ministers nor people failed to consider "how great this man was," the celebrity of whose name deservedly increased, year after year, till his death in 1831. His extraordinary gifts had been discovered before his return to the communion in which he was first nurtured, and wherein, by his greatness and majesty as a preacher, by his able secretaryship of missions, and by his superior theological writings, he rose to a height of fame which very few reach. "It is a permanent honour," says his biographer, "to the Methodist New Connexion to have been a means of rescuing him from obscurity and sorrow, and that it afforded him an opportunity of cultivating those talents by which multitudes of mankind have been instructed and edified, and which are likely to promote the interests of generations yet unborn." His biographer's account of his reasons for leaving the Methodist New Connexion, though open to some objection, need not be criticised here.

In 1813 the minimum salary which ministers should receive for the maintenance of themselves and their families was agreed upon; it was resolved that, in addition to the use of houses and furniture free of rent and taxes, they should receive a variety of allowances, which need not be specified. The arrangements were satisfactory to all concerned. Also to this year, and to some years before and after, belongs the unpleasant history of litigations respecting some chapels to which the Old Connexion had legal right, although majorities of trustees and worshippers asserted their preference for the New. The strifes to which these cases gave rise require mention; but at this time of day there is no good reason to say anything more about them than that honest intentions in the defeated disputants were coupled with mistakes to which legal advisers gave their support.

The Conference of 1814, held at Hanley, was deeply impressed with the visitation by which the lay-representative of the Hanley Circuit for that year was suddenly taken from

its very midst into the Master's presence. In the first of the business sessions Mr. Job Ridgway was seized with apoplexy, and after some hours of insensibility was uplifted to the Church triumphant. He was the head of the firm in which Mr. William Smith was a partner, and was one of the foremost originators of the Hanley Church. It was by strenuous working with settled purpose that he rose out of the troubles in which his thoughtless father had immersed the family, and became a manufacturer of repute and wealth. His conversion took place in his twenty-second year, and led to a religious life of an intensely earnest and resolute type. The author of the "Romance of Staffordshire," after relating in a vivid way the incidents of his earlier years, sums up as follows, a few words being omitted: "If ever man conferred honour on the place of his birth, it is the subject of this sketch. From the time that his father broke down as a master potter at Chell, through the two years of struggle and darkness which followed, the almost penniless expedition to Swansea, and the bad example there, the battle with the bonds of ignorance, and the outlook for a better light, through it all our hero's onward progress was of the highest order. He was no seeker of self, for he considered his spiritual danger of far more concern to him. One can feel from his language how he rejoiced when what he calls conversion made him, as he believed, a new man; how he at once thought of his brother and friends at home; how he toiled for the building of the first chapel in Hanley; what energy and spirit he brought to the work, and how the cause prospered. When disagreement came, and the society for which he had so earnestly and devotedly toiled sought to curtail the liberty he so dearly prized—as only a high-minded, intelligent Englishman can—how strong and persevering was his resistance, never resting until, though unable to mould his first love according to his own notion, he had formed a society after his own wider view. Here, then, we find him possessed of abundance of wealth, resting in a house reared by his own earnings, with an extensive manufactory, his own property, and master of a trade which will bring him more and vaster wealth in the future."

The Church which Mr. Ridgway served so well delighted to honour him. He was chosen five times to represent the circuit in the Conference, and he once discharged the duties of Connexional Treasurer. It should be said emphatically, and the more so because the statement cannot be illustrated or enlarged, that he had a worthy fellow-worker in his elder brother, Mr. George Ridgway, who also was elected circuit representative to the Conference, and was once Treasurer to the Connexion. Both were acceptable local preachers.

At the Conference of 1815 a plan recommended by the Committee of the Beneficent Fund for giving stability and permanence to that Institution, by placing it upon trust, was cordially adopted, together with rules for its government.

On December 1, 1815, the list of departed ministers received another name, the Rev. John Grundell. He was born at Sunderland, June, 1761. In his childhood a painful affliction deprived him of sight. It is hard to imagine what his parents expected in the way of learning when they sent him, blind as he was, to an ordinary school. However, he became an illustration of the successful pursuit of knowledge under difficulties. His practice was, as soon as the school opened, to choose a few of the aptest boys and ask them to master their lessons well ; he would then get them to gather about him and repeat what they had learnt, and after a time, to test and train his marvellous recollection, he would repeat at home or elsewhere much of what several had told him. Every year gave additional proof that he had no ordinary mind. On the death of his parents a generous excise officer took him up, and afforded him such educational helps as enabled him to instruct others with ease and effect. Upon his conversion, at the age of eighteen, he was prompted to preach : " Being a young man and destitute of sight, yet well informed on most subjects, and mighty in the Scriptures, with a commanding voice and a soul full of love for man and zeal for the glory of Christ, he received invitations to visit almost all the country places within several miles of Sunderland." In the course of a few years he became widely known as an instructive preacher who attracted crowds. In 1797, when the Methodist New Connexion was formed, he offered his

services as a circuit preacher, and was appointed successively to Nottingham, Hanley, Manchester, Sheffield, Halifax, York, Alnwick and other places, in all which he was highly esteemed. His appointment in 1813 to North Shields Circuit, which included Sunderland, was agreeable to himself and to many friends on account of hallowed memories. So much was he beloved and revered while stationed here that the boys would pause in their play while he passed along in the streets, and, using a north-country word for every good quality, call to each other, "That is 'canny' Mr. Grundell." His last illness, which was short, was attended with triumphs of joy and hope. Asked if he had any fear of death, he replied, "No ; He is under my feet."

In 1816 Mr. John Ridgway resigned the office of Book Steward, and was succeeded by Mr. T Albut. In the same year the draft of a document, intended to give the community the legal constitution necessary for the assertion of its rights and the protection of its interests, was laid before the circuits. Most of them were favourable to the measure, but jealousy and fear, in relation to some of its provisions, so far prevailed that it was deemed expedient to defer its adoption till its purpose and value should be better understood. In the same year, moreover, a fuller statement of the religious doctrines held and taught by the denomination was published. In 1817 a general effort was made to improve the state of the Book Room, and the next year a deed for its settlement on trust was approved and carried into effect. The Conference of 1818 also resolved to introduce the Connexion into places beyond its existing bounds, and a few Home Mission Stations were established. In 1821 a concerted effort to liquidate the total Connexional debt was brought to a successful issue.

The obituary of the year 1817 records the name of the Rev. W. Price, who for fifteen years was a laborious and faithful preacher of righteousness. In 1818 died Rev. Richard Henshaw, one of four brothers who have ministered to our Churches. The Minutes of 1820 notice the short career of the Rev. John Atherton, whose ability in dividing the word of truth excited large hope. In 1821—the last year of this

division—at the age of sixty-five, the Rev. S. Barrowclough completed a ministry which was always instructive, and sometimes powerfully impressive.

Various causes united to prevent the Methodist New Connexion making rapid progress during the first years of its existence. Many who joined it deserted the cause when they found that the wise and righteous freedom which it provided was not anarchy or insubordination. Others were led by less unworthy motives to leave it, and to return to their former fold. The most populous parts of the country were to a large extent pre-occupied. The New Connexion had to labour where its adherents were widely scattered, and under the disadvantage of difficulty in finding suitable preachers, and in obtaining chapels or commodious room for worship. In some places where sympathy with its principles had been forcibly declared, the smallness of the population prevented it taking root, without such an amount of pecuniary help as could not be supplied. The preachers received sadly insufficient allowances, and the work they had to do was frequently in excess of their strength ; and hence, as well as for other reasons, many desisted, occasioning, time after time, perplexity and discouragement. The author of the “Apology for the Methodists of the New Connexion,” which first appeared in the *Magazine* for 1815, gives its want of a legal constitution as an impediment to the spread of the community. Destitute of this, he says, its stability has been precarious, and even its integrity endangered. Nor must it be omitted in this enumeration that the misapprehensions and prejudices of many concerning the cause of the division were great obstacles in its way : “At the period of our origin,” writes Rev. Dr. Cooke, “toryism was rampant ; the principles of rational liberty were neither appreciated nor understood by the masses in this country. On the contrary, they were scouted and reviled, and their advocates placed under the ban of disloyalty and infidelity. But it was our misfortune to struggle not only against the contumely of the world, but of the Church as well ; and of that section of the Church, too, from which we had a right to expect better things. The names of Jacobin, rebel, leveller, Painite, and revolutioner

were good enough in those days for men whose only sin was that they hated despotism, and whose only aim was to spread through the world simple and earnest Christianity, as free from the trammels of ecclesiastical slavery as from the corruptions of popery." When these adverse circumstances in their combined force are justly estimated, the marvel is that the Connexion did not perish almost as soon as it was born, not that it did not rapidly gather strength and bulk.

At the first Conference, in the year 1797, the number of full adherents was 5,037. In 1802 the number was 5,070. Ten years later, in 1812, the returns were : 25 Circuits and mission stations ; 42 Circuit preachers and missionaries ; 210 local preachers ; 101 chapels ; 8,677 members. In 1822—a quarter of a century from the year of the division—the statistics presented were : 25 Circuits and mission stations ; 47 Circuit preachers and missionaries ; 328 local preachers ; 133 chapels ; and 10,856 members.

CHAPTER II

1822-1847

THE years of the second quarter of the century which the denomination has lived, brought forth but few such events as furnish the historian with materials for his work; but they were years of personal religion and ministerial zeal, in which the surviving founders and first members of the Connexion attested their fidelity to the truth, defending and advancing their distinguishing principles, while spending and being spent for the common salvation. The records of their work and days will be read with interest, especially by members and adherents of the community "Other men laboured and we have entered into their labours." Pioneers in the enterprise which calls forth our energies, builders of the fabric we are associated to rear, labourers whose fields of tillage and culture are those of our own husbandry, our predecessors claim to be gratefully remembered.

That the supply of biographical information may be unstinted, accounts of the doings of Conference from year to year will be given in condensed form.

At the Conference of 1822 a plan for relieving distressed chapels was ordered to be published. In 1823 the "General Rules of the Connexion," as revised and enlarged by a committee previously appointed, were adopted. The same Conference instructed the Book Room to publish at twopence a magazine to be called the *Sunday School Magazine and Juvenile Miscellany*. In 1824 it was resolved to establish the Irish Mission and to devote all monies given for missionary purposes to its sustentation and growth.

Four ministers died in 1825—Thomas Boshier, who was called out as a circuit preacher in 1803, and whose labours were generally acceptable; John Revill, who was called out at the formation of the Connexion, and laboured with acceptance till his health failed in 1815; William Fishwick, who was drowned while bathing in the River Trent; and Joseph R. Brough, who possessed considerable abilities, both natural and acquired.

The Conference of 1825 ordered the publication of a Deed of Trust for our chapels, which a committee had been appointed to prepare. In 1826, the labour of the preachers in several of the Circuits appearing to be excessive, the Conference called upon every Circuit to examine into its arrangements and to alter them where needful in the interests of health and efficiency.

Early in 1826 Rev. Charles Raby, whose useful ministry extended over fifteen years, departed this life in joyful hope, and the following year Rev. Joseph Shone died in the full triumph of faith.

The Conference of 1827 appointed Rev. Wm. Shuttleworth Editor and Book Steward, and under his management, which extended to the year 1841, the annual profits of the institution satisfactorily increased. The same Conference directed the publication of a catechism for children. The able pen of the Rev. Abraham Scott was employed in composing it. In this year, also, the Connexion was deprived by death of two of its foremost leaders.

Robert Hall was born at Nottingham, and died at Sneinton. At the age of seventeen he became a Methodist, and till a chapel was built on his own estate showed his interest in the cause of God by statedly attending public worship in a chapel at Nottingham, three or four miles from Basford, where he then lived. The venerable Wesley was at times his guest and occasionally one of his correspondents. Mr. Hall having applied for some help from Conference towards the building of Hockley "House," or Chapel, Mr. Wesley sent the following laconic answer :—

“ LONDON, *Dec.* 19, 1782.

“ MY DEAR BROTHER,—The Conference *gives nothing* towards building houses, but they may give you more circuits to beg in ; and if you had Joseph Bradford to beg for you, you would succeed well. The Londoners are a princely people ; they are never weary of well-doing. You want only a zealous



MR. ROBERT HALL, BASFORD, NOTTINGHAM.

and skilful advocate, and perseverance in prayer. God will do great things. If I live till March, and your “house” be then ready, I might open it.

“ I am, dear Robert,

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ JOHN WESLEY.”

Mr. R. Hall took an important part in the controversies which resulted in the separation of 1797, and to the end of his days cherished with intelligent appreciation the principles on which the community rests. Having received a liberal education, he freely employed his pen as well as his purse in helping on the rising cause. He edited the first Life of Mr. Kilham, and wrote the introduction to the book. From 1798 to 1805 he was seven times a member of the Annual Committee. He three times represented the Nottingham Circuit in Conference, and twice acted as Conference Secretary. He was unimpeachably exact and upright in business affairs, and as an employer obtained the cordial respect of his workpeople. While unremitting in application to secular affairs, his religion was intensely devotional, and his spiritual pleasures were increased rather than diminished with the progress of age and affliction. "Persons," he would say, "talk of their first love, but I enjoy much more now than I did when I set out. If any person had told me I should enjoy the pleasure I now find in religion, I should not have believed it. There is no comparison between my former and my present enjoyments." He would ask his sons as to their welfare. "I do not ask what hundreds or thousands you are getting in this world. I want to hear that you are laying up millions and billions in a better world." Hallowed cheerfulness distinguished his life till its close, on the 6th of August, 1827.

Rev. James Mort was born at Newcastle-on-Tyne, July, 1770. In his early years his outward circumstances were unfriendly to religion, and, though not without movements towards God, he lived the life of the unregenerate. In his seventeenth year he heard Mr. Wesley preach at Sunderland, and was powerfully affected by his venerable appearance. As he saw him moving down the aisle with trembling step, leaning on the arm of a clergyman, the sight compelled him to shed tears. Not long after he was converted and became a local preacher. Then came the call to wider service. In 1793 he received his first appointment as a circuit minister amongst the Wesleyans. In 1797 he entered the ministry of the new reformed Connexion which he had helped to organise, and commenced his labours in Manchester. His subsequent

appointments were to Hull, Manchester (the second time), Newcastle, Nottingham, Leeds, Hanley, Huddersfield (a second time), Hull a second time, Manchester a third time, Sheffield a second time, Chester, Longton, Bolton, Thorne, and Liverpool. In most of these Circuits he laboured in extensive fields, and reaped considerable success. He was grave in aspect, gentle in manners, in the pulpit instructive and solemnising, out of the pulpit "full of mercy and good fruits." His benevolence soothed and comforted the poor and afflicted by words of sympathy and gifts of relief. In 1827 he was appointed to Liverpool, the last scene of his ministerial labours. Affliction had already weakened his bodily powers, and as summer ended, his enfeebled frame began to show signs of speedy dissolution. Prayer now became his constant occupation, and good hope emboldened him to meet the last enemy. He ended his days in holy peace, December 31, 1827, his last words being "God is my all in all."

The Minutes of 1829 record the death of Rev. James Dunkerley, who had laboured with acceptance, and also of the Rev. Alex. Donaldson, a native of Ireland, who commenced his labours there in 1813.

Mr. Samuel Heginbottom was born at Alt Hill, Ashton, December 22, 1756. He owed much to the restraints and counsels of his parents, who attended the services of the Established Church. But though often the subject of deep convictions, he allowed some years of manhood to glide away before he gave himself to God. In his twenty-eighth year, when he had removed to Manchester, he was induced by some of his Methodist connections to hear their preachers. The word of truth gradually found its way to his heart, and he resolved to cast in his lot with the Methodist people. He became happy in God in the open air. While walking on the way from Manchester to Ashton and pleading for deliverance from the load of guilt, he was enabled to believe, and was filled with joy and peace in believing. His newly found joy incited him to persuade his relatives and friends to seek the redemption he had found, and as the result several of them did so and entered into Church fellowship. On the formation of our Connexion he espoused its cause, and

sought to increase its strength and stability. He felt that a talent had been committed to him to employ for the Church's prosperity, and that it should concern itself mainly with external affairs. He was the foremost of the founders of the Beneficent Society for the support of disabled and supernumerary ministers and their widows and children. He also rendered valuable assistance by his wisdom and liberality in the establishment of the Paternal Fund. Indeed there were few, if any, financial schemes adopted by the Connexion in the first period in the institution and shaping of which he did not usefully share. In the time of old age, under great debility, he was supported by foretastes of life in heaven. He died, March 19, 1829, aged seventy-two years.

Rev. John Henshaw, one of four brothers who have served in our ministerial ranks, was born at Edge, Bolton, Salop, 1798, and spent his childhood and youth at Hanley, Staff. It was his mother's custom to read aloud in the family circle religious books of an earnest tone. The reading in this manner of Doddridge's "Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul" deeply impressed him. In 1818 he was called to supply Ashton Circuit; the four following years were spent in Manchester, Halifax, and Glasgow Circuits. His appointments as a married preacher were to Huddersfield, Leeds, and Nottingham. His natural cheerfulness was so blended with gravity in religious exercises that he was regarded with affectionate reverence. He was an extensive reader, and brought out of his treasure things new and old. He was familiar with the writings of Wesley and Fletcher, and delighted to unfold their views of the doctrines most distinctive of Methodism, especially the witness of the Spirit and the maturity of Christian holiness. The earnest pleading manner in which he prayed assisted his fellow-suppliants to come with boldness to the mercy-seat, and contributed greatly to his usefulness. His constitution, which was not robust, early began to fail. In his affliction he enjoyed unbroken composure. On the day before that on which his happy spirit took its flight, he said to a friend, "I would not change my dying condition for worlds." He gently fell asleep July 27, 1829, aged thirty-one years.

Of Rev. Geo. Shaw it is said that "deep personal piety, independence of mind, sweetness of disposition, and great diligence in ministerial and pastoral duties, pointed him out as a youth of peculiar promise. When just sinking in the arms of death, in reply to a question relative to the state of his feelings he said, 'I am happy, happy, thrice happy!'" He died May, 1830, in the twenty-fifth year of his age.

In the midst of extending usefulness, and whilst wielding an influence in the community which few in comparative youth can expect to exert, David Barker was torn away from earth in a sudden and violent manner which caused his removal to be acutely felt. Travelling by coach on the way from Bolton to Manchester, where he was expected to preach the next day, through reckless driving which overturned the coach, he was flung upon the ground and so dreadfully injured that he died in a few days. Mr. Barker was richly endowed by nature and by grace. In the powers of retention and reproduction he had few superiors. He diligently applied himself to theological reading. He also pursued courses of reading on general subjects, and of the stores thus collected he had ready command. His style, not ardent or forcible, was clear and smooth, a fair reflection of his inner qualities. His publications, "The Parent's Memorial" and the "Juvenile Exemplar," were written to do real spiritual good, and received contemporaneous praise as being suited to their design. His discourses were instructive, experimental, and practical, and could not be heard without advantage, and his attention to pastoral duties as well as his general conduct in social life won commendation. The active benevolence which rejoices to bless, the piety which seeks in everything direction from above, humility, meekness, the endearing qualities which fit for friendship, are all amply exemplified in "Friendship's Memorial," a memoir of him written jointly by Revs. T. Allin and W. Shuttleworth. He died on March 19, 1831.

William Driver, an eloquent, animated, impulsive preacher, by whom many were turned into the way of life, was born at Bromforth Crag, in the bleak, mountainous district of Craven, in Yorkshire. Adversity had impoverished his parents with-

out robbing them of precious faith, and they laboured to train up their son for God. But in youth he associated with the irreligious, and walked according to the course of this world. It was not till he was twenty-two years of age that he decided to serve the Lord. A dreadful explosion in a colliery at Middleton, where he was employed, was the providential means by which he was roused from religious stupor, and led to repentance. His former ungodly companions schemed and strove to reverse his decision, but failed; his heart was established with grace. Some time after his conversion he entered the service of a clergyman owning a large colliery at Ardsley, near Wakefield. The Rev. Mr. Wood was pleased with Mr. Driver's efforts after improvement and knowledge, and personally taught him book-keeping, writing, and grammar. Watching his progress in learning, and hearing of his zeal as a local preacher, he became convinced that his gifts required a larger sphere for their exercise, and kindly proposed to open his way into the ministry of the Established Church. Not without thankfulness, Mr. Driver, at the bidding of conscience, declined the offer of his generous employer. On the summons of many friends, who felt that he was intended for the full ministry, he entered on his itinerant career in the Huddersfield Circuit, and continued his labours till the year 1825. Throughout his course he was extremely popular, and his popularity rested on solid grounds. The themes on which he descanted were great themes, and his congregations were often strangely moved by his impassioned declamation respecting the love or the fidelity of God, or the unsearchable riches of Christ and Him crucified. Such was the fervour of His delivery, the impetuosity with which he poured forth his statements and appeals, that at the close of his sermon he was frequently spent. That which made his energy of speech and action so conscience-searching was his undeniable sincerity. It was manifest that his one grand object was to bring souls to Christ. He was powerful in prayer, both in public and in private, and had special aptitude and inclination for pastoral visiting. In business meetings his soundness of judgment and firmness of purpose appeared to advantage. No wonder

the seals of his ministry and pastorate could be counted by hundreds. He was three times President of Conference, and eleven times entrusted with the work of the Stationing Committee. In his last years he was the subject of severe and prolonged affliction, in which his graces shone with superior brightness. His humility and heavenliness were very lustrous. Writing to a friend, after he had suffered a second shock of paralysis, "I have," he said, "some blessed visits of heavenly joy bearing up my soul, which I hope will continue till I arrive at the vision of God." When one said to him "You will soon receive your reward," he replied, with a gush of tears, "I am a poor sinner, saved by grace." It was clear that "as his afflictions abounded his consolations did much more abound." He died on the 16th June, 1831, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

Rev. William Milner "was possessed of eminent piety and great capabilities of usefulness. Prudence, humility, fortitude, and zeal characterised his conduct both as a Christian and a minister. The full prospect of glory enabled him to shout 'Victory!' while passing through the valley and shadow of death. He died October, 1832."

Rev. Joseph Manners was a native of Sheffield. When he was about fifteen years of age he was filled with spiritual concern under the powerful ministry of Rev Joseph Benson, at that time stationed at Sheffield. His anxiety was increased by alarming dreams. Through indulgence in novel-reading, in his seventeenth year, the ardour of his religious feelings declined. After a time his solicitude for the safety of his soul returned, and the truths of religion acquired a permanent hold on his heart. He entered the denomination during the year Mr. Kilham was stationed in Sheffield. He sought to do good by preaching, and succeeded so well that his brethren urged him to devote himself to the itinerant life. At the Conference of 1802 he was appointed to Hull. "From that period to the day of his death," says the obituary, "he continued a faithful and zealous minister of the gospel. It was his happiness to possess the affection and confidence of the various Churches which he served for the space of thirty-three years." In the pulpit he was able to explain the oracles of

God so as to edify the body of Christ, and in Leaders,' Local Preachers', and Quarterly Meetings, his habitual placidity and self-control enabled him to "rule well." Kindness to the poor was the most distinguishing feature of his character. He considered the young the most important part of his charge, and wrote much to prepare them by Christian knowledge and grace to be useful to the Church and the world. Some of his compositions he published. The "Mental Pole Star" and the "Family Portrait" were regarded in their time as wholesome and interesting books. He was President of Conference in 1812. He died suddenly in October, 1834. He was sixty-six years of age.

Rev. Hamer Dawson possessed powers of mind associated with habits of study which, had his life been prolonged, would have rendered him a highly acceptable minister of the gospel. He died October, 1834.

Rev. Henry Seals was early imbued with a knowledge of the truth, and was sent out into the Christian ministry in 1826. There was a peculiar earnestness and fervency in the manner of his preaching, and it was frequently attended by special marks of Divine approval. He died November, 1834.

The name of John Tittensor was added to the list of deceased ministers in 1835.

A venerable layman at this time entered into his rest. Mr. William Black, who was born at Malone, near Belfast, was ninety years of age when he finished his course, February, 1835. For seventy years Methodism owned him as a member; for sixty-eight years as a class leader. In 1767 he had the pleasant distinction of entertaining Mr. Wesley. On one occasion he travelled with others a distance of twenty-five miles to hear Mr. Wesley preach. The text taken was "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." When Mr. Wesley came to speak on the latter clause, "but are as the angels of God," he repeated it several times. His soul was so filled with rapture that he could not proceed; he burst into tears and said, "Let us pray" The whole of the assembly was deeply affected. "I have never," said Mr. Black, "enjoyed, nor do I expect to enjoy, another such time on this side

eternity." His severance from the Wesleyans dated from July, 1798, when thirty-two stewards and leaders of the Lisburn Church appealed to the Irish Conference, held in Dublin, to admit lay-representatives to the District Meeting and the Conference. The Conference declared its rejection of lay-representation in every form, and renounced all connection with the petitioners. If the revolutionary tendency of that agitated time be allowed to palliate the injustice of such summary excision, let it also vivify the sense of the perilous situation in which the rejected were placed. "Soldiers were stationed near Lisburn, and any persons convicted of disloyalty were either shot, hanged, or beheaded, as examples to others. Some one gave a list of their names—thirty-two leaders, stewards, and trustees—to the General of the King's army, stating that they were rebels against the State, Jacobins in principle, that they held secret meetings, and were unfit to live. The General, while riding with Lieut. Coulson, of Lisburn, on the road to Belfast, showed him the letter, and inquired of him concerning them. The Lieutenant, on looking at the document, said he knew them all, that there were not more loyal men in the kingdom, and that the letter arose from a religious quarrel. The General gave the letter to the Lieutenant, who showed it to Mr. Black and his friends. Thus they were saved from unmerited reproach, and perhaps from an untimely and disgraceful end." Mr. Black earnestly laboured to bring about the union of himself and friends with the Methodist New Connexion in England, and to the close of his long life commended the community by his lofty example and prayerful zeal.

The Conference of 1836, in the hope of extending the usefulness of the Irish Mission, appointed Rev Wm. Cooke to the office of General Superintendent, and recommended the holding of a monthly prayer-meeting in all the Churches for imploring the blessing of God on the work. The appointment established confidence in the stability of the Mission, and led to great increase in the number of preaching stations and to permanent increase in membership, notwithstanding continual losses from emigration. The personal excellences

and the indefatigable labours of Mr. Cooke were valued most highly, amongst others by his fellow-workers the missionaries, who, on the eve of his return to England, presented him with an address and a copy of Bagster's Polyglot Bible, in ten languages, suitably inscribed.

In the beginning of 1837, Rev. William Styan passed to his rest and reward, his last words being, "I am going—God bless you; come after me." He took an active part in the formation of the Connexion, and was immediately called into its ministry, in which he continued until 1831, when through increasing feebleness he became unable to proceed. His preaching was doctrinal. He loved the great central truths of the gospel, and loved to explain and apply them to men of all classes and conditions. The devout and thoughtful were edified by his words. He was stationed at Leeds twice, at Nottingham twice, and at Sheffield three times. He was President of Conference in 1806 and again in 1825. He died at the age of seventy-two.

In the spring of next year the Rev. James Ousey, who was born a few years before the division, and commenced his duties as an itinerant minister at the Conference of 1816, died so suddenly that he may be said to have ceased "at once to work and live." He cultivated his power by extensive reading and regular study, and by his personal qualities and pulpit and pastoral ministrations won the esteem of a wide circle of friends. Following these, after brief terms of service, the Revs. Alfred Bywater and George Carlisle died in faith.

At the Liverpool Conference of 1836 a resolution was passed authorising the Annual Committee to send a missionary to the province of Upper Canada for the purpose of forming a mission in that quarter. In 1837 the Rev. John Addyman was appointed, and the reports received from him being of the most cheering description, in 1839 the Rev. H. O. Crofts was sent to strengthen the enterprise. Both these representatives of the Connexion were honoured to reap much. The union of some Canadian Wesleyans with the Methodist New Connexion took place in 1841, Mr. William Ridgway receiving special thanks for negotiating the arrangements.

In 1838 a committee appointed to examine and revise the General Rules having laid their report before Conference, it was resolved to print the rules, as revised, for the guidance and government of the body.

In 1839 the Report of a Special Book Room Committee, proposing a variety of alterations and the formation of a new Trust Deed, was discussed and adopted.

Rev William Haslam was one of the men called out as circuit preachers during the months which followed the Conference of 1797. Having received a liberal education, he sought to enrich his mind with knowledge, especially with theology, and became an able minister of the New Testament. In social life he was buoyant and sportive, enlivening conversation by sallies of humour "within the limits of becoming mirth." In 1813 he was appointed President of Conference, and in 1824 he was re-elected to the office. Rev. T Allin, who knew him well, gives the following general view of his character. "He united a strong and cultivated mind with an enlarged and generous heart; manly independence with unaffected humility; an enlightened and unwavering attachment to the doctrines and polity of the community to which he belonged with a catholicity which recognised the common brotherhood of all lovers of Christ; disinterestedness which deemed no sacrifice too great when duty called, with a fortitude which never failed in seasons of greatest difficulty. Equally wise in counsel, firm in resolve, and vigorous in action, he ranked with the pillars of the Connexion in its days of weakness and danger, and terminated a consistent and honourable course, happy in the faith and hope of the gospel." His victory over the last foe was complete. Among his last words were "Christ is mine; I am happy—Glory! Glory! Glory!" He died at Hanley, December, 1839, aged seventy-one years.

At the Conference of 1840 the Chapel Fund was established, to afford relief to chapels in distress and to promote the wise administration of trust estates; and in 1845 the Rev. W. Ford, the Secretary, and Mr. R. Barford, the Treasurer, employed effective means to expedite the business of this department.

The Conference of 1841, held at Halifax, will always be

memorable as that by which the Rev. Joseph Barker was expelled on the ground of doctrinal laxity and unsoundness. Mr. Barker, whose parents were Wesleyans, was himself a member of the Wesleyan Society at Bramley, near Leeds, where they lived. In his youth he transferred himself to our people at Armley, alleging as his reason preference of our polity. On the recommendation of one of our Circuits, which he had served as supply, he was received on probation for the ministry by the Conference of 1829, when he was entering on his twenty-fourth year. Mr. Barker was remarkable both for physical vigour and for general intellectual ability. With powers of perception and of memory above the average, he possessed a capacious and fertile imagination, which enabled him at pleasure to transfuse into other minds and hearts the thoughts and feelings of his own. His appearance was manly and impressive, his address insinuating; his style clear and natural; his voice mellow and well modulated. The exhibition of these qualities in preaching and lecturing on religious themes and social questions, especially in opposition to intemperance and infidel Socialism, was calculated to gain for him popularity and command; and he was extensively popular and influential. But he loved distinction more than truth, and slighted authority in pursuit of freedom. In the first stage of his career he discovered an erratic spirit by breaking arrangements of the economy which he had promised to keep, and abused the leniency with which these irregular acts were treated by indulging in various eccentricities. But it was in regard to doctrine rather than discipline that he threw himself into disagreement and, at length, into open conflict with the Connexion. As he failed to teach the most vital parts of orthodox belief, and gave out, sometimes openly, but oftener by insidious suggestion, a variety of heretical sentiments, doubt and suspicion regarding him began to be entertained by considerable numbers. When challenged to defend the peculiarities of his teaching, his manœuvres were those which are commonly adopted by "men who arise speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." Expressing regret for un wisdom in his statements, and promising to be more careful and considerate

in all that he uttered by speech or by pen, he succeeded in concealing his real opinions and in postponing final discipline. Soon, however, his preaching and conversation renewed distrust and discontent, and excited grave fears with regard to his ulterior designs. He drew upon himself the censure of Conference by publishing a pamphlet against creeds and formularies of every kind, but stated his sophisms in such a way as to appear to many an honest advocate of wholesome freedom. Heedless of advice and remonstrance, he commenced a periodical as a means of spreading knowledge of his sentiments, with the result that doubt as to his orthodoxy, instead of subsiding, became more anxious and general. While prudently laying up for his own future needs, he pleaded for the virtual subversion of the institution which supports superannuated ministers and widows, as being at variance with faith in Providence. Mr. Barker, knowing well that by his erratic procedures he was sorely testing forbearance, but miscalculating the force of sympathy in his favour, now ventured on deviations of far greater moment. He denied the Divine authority of baptism, and refused to administer the rite. He also denied the permanent obligation of the Lord's Supper. At this juncture the leaders of the Connexion found themselves placed in a critical situation, but the path of duty was clear, and was instantly chosen. Loyalty to Christ determined that, at whatever risk, the delinquent must be arraigned. The Annual Committee therefore gave Mr. Barker formal notice of the charges which would be brought against him at the Conference (Halifax, 1841), and made necessary arrangements for the investigation.

The trial extended over several days, and was conducted so that Mr. Barker had full opportunity to vindicate his conduct, and to retract or defend his declared opinions. The Conference then adopted, by a nearly unanimous vote, the following resolution :—

“That although, under ordinary circumstances, the Conference would pause before it proceeded to extremities, yet, considering the injury already done by Mr. Barker's conduct, and the repeated efforts made to restrain him in his mistaken course, and seeing also these efforts have only served to

increase the number of his innovations and the sphere of their influence, the Conference feels bound, by its obligation to Christ, and by its responsibility to Him and the Church, to exercise the authority given it for the preservation of the doctrines and ordinances which the Redeemer has established in their purity and efficiency. The Conference also feels itself called upon to declare that Mr. Barker cannot with consistency *desire* to remain any longer in our ministry ; nor can the Conference permit him so to do ; it has therefore no other course left but to discontinue him as a minister amongst us, and does, with the greatest pain, discontinue him accordingly."

After his dismissal Mr. Barker did his utmost for years to divide and devastate the Churches. And mournful was the havoc which he and his partisans wrought. The returns made to the Conference of 1842 showed that the Connexion had lost 29 societies and 4,348 members. Several chapels were wrested from us for a time, and could be recovered only by expensive lawsuits. Some were permanently alienated. Nor was the whole of the mischief at that time apparent. Nowhere was the disruption greater than at Newcastle-on-Tyne. To arrest and repel Mr. Barker's bold onsets there, the Rev. Wm. Cooke was removed from Liverpool to Newcastle, in spite of his pleadings and protests, as one who was specially qualified for the onerous service. For a time Mr. Cooke thought it best to preach the truth with little of the militant in his speech or his spirit, hoping thus to counteract the heretical movement. At length, however, he was moved to oppose truth to error in some controversial tracts, and before many more months had passed he felt it to be a duty to accept Mr. Barker's challenge to public discussion.

The debate began Aug. 9, 1845, in the Lecture Hall, Nelson Street, Newcastle, and occupied ten nights. Its progress was followed by a crowd of eager listeners, and by a vastly larger number of readers. At its close victory sat on the helmet of the Christian champion, and his successful exposure of error presented in the most plausible guise, drew forth the joyful congratulations of believers of the truth, "even as truth is in Jesus" in all parts of the country. The religious people of Newcastle and the neigh-

bourhood, at a public meeting in the Music Hall, Newcastle, presented him with a testimonial as a token of their high personal esteem, and of their sense of the services he had rendered to the cause of their common Christianity. The case which now adorns the library of the college at Ranmoor, Sheffield, has the following inscription engraved on a plate inserted above the architrave: "This case containing the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' and Bagster's Comprehensive Bible was presented by the Christian public to the Rev W Cooke as a testimonial of the high sense they entertain of his very able and triumphant defence of the doctrines of Evangelical truth in a public discussion with Mr. Jos. Barker, held in the Lecture Room, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, August, 1845, on the question, 'What is a Christian?'"

After the discussion Mr. Barker went from bad to worse, lecturing on the side of infidelity in England and America, till, away beyond the limits of the United States, in the desolate regions of Nebraska, he came, as he tells us, "near to the horrors of utter atheism." But over this dark chapter of his changeful life we may quickly pass to recognise the Divine mercy which gleams on every succeeding page. Those well acquainted with the facts believe that he regained the faith which he felt and professed in his earlier days, and enjoyed for sixteen years after his reconversion the forgiveness of the Redeemer whom he had blasphemed.

The injury which the Connexion suffered through Mr. Barker's conduct, and which his return, had it been effected sooner, could have but slightly repaired, cannot be told. But it was not without compensation. The troubles of the agitation were overruled for good. Unwholesome elements were purged away as by fire. Mutual attachment between ministers and people became closer. The Connexion gained a fuller consciousness of strength, and rejoiced in a surer hope of prosperity. There was also growth of Connexional loyalty, drawing after it greater liberality in giving for Connexional needs. While financial resources were diminished by the loss of so many members, financial requirements were in many ways increased. To meet the deficiencies which the crisis occasioned to all the Denominational funds, a large exercise

in generous contribution was needed. At the Conference of 1843 the ministers took the lead in dealing with the oppressive burdens, proposing the extinction of all the debt, and themselves offering the sum of £500 towards this object. The lay representatives and their friends felt the force of this provocation, and followed the example set them with such heartiness that by the following Conference upwards of £5,000 had been raised towards the liquidation.

The obituary pages in the Minutes of 1843 commemorate the Rev. W. R. Wood, who commenced his labours at the time of the division, consecrated all his strength to the Christian cause, and bearing the standard of faith, was more than conqueror as he walked through the dark valley. Also, the Rev. Wm. Campbell, whose articles in the *Magazine* on "Man's Accountability for his Belief," and on some kindred subjects, show that, had he been spared, he must have stood in the front rank of the ministry.

In the next Annual Minutes, in answer to the question, "What ministers have died this year?" four names appear:—

Rev. Thos. T. Coxon, who had been nine years in the ministry; his last months were marked by holy patience under suffering.

Rev. Thos. Batty, who, though not possessed of superior mental accomplishments, is said to have been remarkably successful in winning souls to Christ.

Rev. Abraham Jackson, in whose spirit and conduct the great change took place while he was in the army. When the militia was disbanded he returned to Failsworth, his native place, and soon afterwards entered the Connexion, which received him on probation in 1803. As a preacher, it is said "he was plain, pointed, and energetic." He enforced "the necessity of an entire change of heart, and dwelt frequently on the doctrine of the direct witness of the Spirit, which he considered as the glory of the Methodist ministry. His manner of preaching was original, and the striking remarks he often made arrested the attention, and reached the consciences of his hearers." In 1819 he was elected President of Conference. In his last affliction, which

was long and painful, he was kept in perfect peace. He exchanged mortality for life, April 18, 1844.

Rev. F. Newberry died a day or two before the Conference of 1844 in the fifty-second year of his age. He entered the itinerancy in 1813, and was appointed a second time in five of his Circuits, an evidence of the value set upon his ministry. The obituary in the Minutes says that "the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus was the prominent and frequently recurring theme of his sermons; and the natural strength and liveliness of his imagination rendered the general mode of his preaching peculiarly figurative, without, however, doing violence to truth. Not confining his attention to members, or even hearers of the Word, he literally went out into the streets and highways, urging the people to come in, that God's house might be furnished with guests."

The association of Circuits in Districts, as reflected in the plan of the Stationing Committee, is shown for the first time in the Minutes of Conference, 1845. The purposes of the arrangement, and of the District Meetings to which it gave rise, were, as briefly stated in the General Rules, to unite Circuits more closely in the bonds of affection; to secure cheerful and efficient co-operation throughout the year; and to make such an arrangement of local and Connexional matters as shall relieve the Conference of secular business and thereby enable it to give more attention to the spiritual affairs of the Connexion. The constitution and functions of District Meetings were settled at the Conference of 1844, but since then improvements have been gradually made which have rendered them more serviceable in facilitating the transaction of Conference business.

In 1844 the Rev. J. Bakewell was appointed Connexional Editor and Book Steward; and the same year, by order of Conference, the Book Room was removed from Manchester to London, according to the recommendation of a special Committee instructed to consider the expediency of the change.

Two more deaths occurred in the ministry of this period. Rev. Thos. Robinson died in the spring of 1846, after zealously discharging his itinerant duties for nearly twenty-six years; and the same year the missionary work in Ireland

of Rev. Wm. McClune, a devoted servant of Christ and the Church, was completed.

In 1846 the legal instrument known as the Deed Poll of the Connexion, which had been submitted to the Quarterly Meetings for their approval, was considered and adopted by the Conference. The Deed Poll defines the constitution of the Conference and its relation to the several parts of the Connexion, and contains a concise yet definite statement of the religious doctrines which are to be permanently held and taught. The Deed legalises the community in the persons of twenty-four guardian-representatives, and requires that as in the first selection, so when vacancies occur, twelve of them continue to be ministers and twelve laymen. The appointment of the guardian-representatives rests in all cases with the Conference for the time being. Ecclesiastically, the guardian-representatives can do nothing whatever, save as they are actually included in the Annual Conference ; only for legal purposes are they competent to act alone. Six of them at least must be in attendance to make the Conference of any year legal. The guardian-representatives were chosen at first not from a few districts merely, but from all parts of the Connexion, and in subsequent appointments regard has continued to be had to localities. The list of the original guardians, with the town in which each lay-representative lived added to his name, is as follows : Revs. Thos. Waterhouse, Simeon Woodhouse, Thomas Allin, Thomas Scattergood, William Ford, William Burrows, James Henshaw, William Cooke, John Bakewell, William Baggaly, Samuel Hulme, Parkinson T Gilton ; Messrs. John Ridgway, Hanley ; Jonathan Thornhill, Stockport ; Richard Barford, London ; William Makinson, Manchester ; John Robinson, Liverpool ; James Jackson, Macclesfield ; Thomas Lester, Dudley ; Joseph Fenton, Sheffield ; Richard Sutton, Nottingham ; Christopher T Tiffany, Leeds ; John Allen, Newcastle-upon-Tyne ; Richard Roberts, Huddersfield.

Only one of the original twenty-four, the Rev. S. Hulme, remains to commemorate the Centenary.

The Deed Poll, having been duly executed, was enrolled in the High Court of Chancery on September 3, 1846.

The principles and provisions of the Model Trust Deed, now in general use in the settlement of properties to the Connexion, were also approved by the Conference of 1846, and directed to be brought into operation.

But that which crowned the Manchester Conference of 1846 with distinction was that it opened our "Year of Jubilee." The high honour of presiding over the Jubilee Conference deservedly rested on the Rev. Thomas Allin, while Mr. John Robinson, of Liverpool, was rightly deemed worthy to receive the secretaryship. It was a time of elevated and grateful rejoicing. A scheme was approved by which £20,000 should be raised, to be appropriated to the relief of distressed chapels; the establishment of a preparatory institution for ministers; the support of missionary operations, and some other objects. A public meeting was held on Friday, June 5th, in the Free Trade Hall, to inaugurate the movement. The enthusiasm of the gathering, which numbered above four thousand, answered to the occasion. Under the guidance of a large committee, canvass for subscriptions was subsequently pursued throughout the Connexion, and eventually the sum of £7,721 was realised. This amount, though not equal to the wishes and expectations of the most liberal givers, while at first their hearts were throbbing with thankfulness and joy, was a creditable contribution, in view of the exhaustive giving which many had practised because of recent exigencies.

The Conference also proposed that as a memorial of the Jubilee a volume should be written setting forth the distinctive principles, the history, and the obligations of the Connexion, and requested the Revs. Thos. Allin, Wm. Cooke, Samuel Hulme, and Philip Jas. Wright to prepare and publish the work. In this admirable volume, which passed through two editions, the chapters written by the authors respectively, if not indicated in the preface, could be easily identified by their characteristic styles.

In 1832 the statistics reported to Conference were: 35 Circuits and mission stations; 68 Circuit preachers and missionaries; 511 local preachers; 181 chapels; 12,021 members. At the Conference of 1840, which immediately

preceded the Conference at which Mr. Barker was discontinued, the returns were 59 Circuits and mission stations ; 120 preachers and missionaries ; 862 local preachers ; 304 chapels ; 21,836 members. In 1847, as the result of the ceaseless conflict between gains and losses, the numerical state of the Connexion was as follows : 81 Circuits and mission stations ; 140 Circuit preachers and missionaries ; 776 local preachers ; 331 chapels ; 19,462 members.

CHAPTER III

1847—1872

THE extension of the missionary operations, including especially the inauguration of the mission to the heathen, and the establishment of the College for the education of ministers, are the chief features of the third division of our denominational history. These therefore must be traced as fully as our necessary limits will permit ; but some occurrences and affairs of less eminent interest deserve to be noticed.

The period opens at the time of wasting fever and famine caused by the failure of the potato crop in Ireland and other countries. Appalling were the ravages of want and pestilence among the congregations in Ulster. The liberality of our people in England, while themselves suffering from contraction of trade and commerce, afforded timely relief, and the Conference of 1847 expressed its pleasure that a ready response had been given to the cry of the distressed.

This year Mr. John Shaw, of Pudsey, already popular as a local preacher in the West Riding of Yorkshire, becomes more widely known as a preacher of a type now passing away. He represents the Bradford Circuit in the Conference for the first of five times. Nearly three thousand people crowd into Bethesda Chapel for the Lovefeast. Amid the multitude of believers John rises to tell his experience. The peculiarities of his native dialect, his transparent devoutness, his apt use of Scripture, and especially his overflowing joy, stir all deeply, and inspire a general wish to hear him preach. As the week advances it is simply announced that "the weaver from Pudsey will take the service on Friday morning."

Accordingly, at five o'clock on the Friday morning, he preaches an animated sermon to a congregation of a thousand and upwards, some of whom have travelled miles to listen to his message. From that time his popularity and usefulness extended on every side, his eccentricities of manner, his original and often humorous remarks, his felicitous illus-



JOHN SHAW, PUDSEY.

trations of religious truth, his never-failing and always genial fervour drawing numbers to hear the Word at his mouth. He died suddenly, November 10, 1879, having been a local preacher and class leader for more than fifty years. The inscription on a white marble tablet in Mount Zion Chapel, Pudsey, bears witness that "by his unwearied labours

as a preacher, and a visitor of the sick and dying, he was rendered eminently useful far beyond the limits of his own denomination."

Book Room affairs received attention in 1848 and 1849, when a new deed of the Book Room was prepared and executed, adapted to the provisions of the Connexional Deed Poll and to altered conditions. The document empowers and directs eighteen ministers and nineteen laymen to exercise all the rights of trusteeship in favour of the institution, subject only to such regulations as the Conference may ordain. In 1856 the Conference directed a well-chosen Committee to prepare and publish a Book of Chants for the use of such congregations as might desire to use it. In 1862 the Hymn Book now in use, containing 1,024 hymns, including some of the choicest from all sources, was adopted, the arduous labours of Rev. Henry Piggin, convener of the Committee entrusted with its preparation, receiving due acknowledgment. The Juvenile Hymn Book and the Tune Book, prepared by competent Committees, were also adopted about the same time.

The business which the Annual Committee, as the executive organ of the Connexion, has to transact between one Conference and another had been for many years very largely entrusted to one of its members, called the Corresponding Member. The Conference of 1849 abolished this office, and its duties have ever since been performed by the President.

The Conference of 1850 directed that the Committee for guiding the studies and examining the productions of ministers on probation should for the future be designated the "Theological Committee." This Committee was first appointed in 1842. The Rev. J. Bensley, whose knowledge of science and of general literature, as well as of theology, fitted him for the office, was Secretary from 1846 to 1850, when he was succeeded by Rev. S. Woodhouse, who discharged the duties for five years to the profit of the young ministers brought under his supervision. Mr. Woodhouse was a guardian representative, and twice President of Conference. In 1856 the office of Secretary of the Theological Committee was given to Rev. J. Hudston, a good and faithful servant.

Financial schemes received improvement during this period. In 1850 a more effective method of supporting the Paternal Fund was proposed, resting on the principle of a prospective estimate. The Circuits accepted the plan, and the institution was thus placed on a surer basis. Another fruit of financial energy was the establishment of the Auxiliary Fund, "intended to assist ministers on their superannuation, and widows of ministers who die in Circuit work, to furnish houses for themselves (General Rules)." By order of the Conference of 1851 a small sum contributed by the Jubilee Effort towards this object—about £500—was set apart and invested. As it was very far from being adequate for the purpose, to raise it up to some degree of efficiency, the Treasurer, Rev. W Baggaly, in 1864 offered to give £100, if the Connexion would raise £900 more, so as to augment the capital to £1,500. A practical response was made to the generous offer, ministers and people uniting to contribute, with the result that, as stated in the "Digest," in eleven years this fund more than trebled its capital. In 1861 it stood at £500, and in 1872 it was found to have realised £1,637 18s. 3d. "The creation of a Fund by which trustees of Connexional property might be guaranteed against loss or damage by fire had long been regarded as very desirable, and engaged the attention of some of the leading minds of the Connexion. The Conference of 1857 passed a resolution in favour of such a fund, and empowered the Chapel Committee to consider and report thereon. The Committee prepared the draft of a Constitution and a code of rules for the institution, and having obtained an assurance from eminent counsel as to the legality of their proceedings, submitted the whole to the Conference of 1860, which, with some amendments, confirmed and adopted them. The Conference also appointed twenty persons as guarantors and trustees, and engaged to indemnify them against any personal loss on account of their guarantee to provide £200 each in case of need. In 1853 while the state of most of the Funds was satisfactory, the Beneficent Fund was found to require special attention and more liberal support. A few years previously it had been

judged necessary to reduce the annuities of the widows and aged preachers, and to require the members of the Society to increase their annual subscriptions. By these means the Fund had improved, but its state was still deficient; greater improvement must take place before the annuities could be paid according to full scale. The Conference gave serious consideration to the report of the Committee, and recommended means to improve the condition of the Fund. The recommendation proved effective and availed to the advantage both of the ministers in active service and of the annuitants. In 1857 the Conference became convinced that the resources at the disposal of the Chapel Fund Committee were far too limited, and organised the next year a special effort to increase the income. Some large promises on fair conditions were made by wealthy friends, which led to earnest and successful exertion.

The obituary entries of 1850 and the next two or three years record the death of several well-known ministers.

The Rev. Abraham Scott was born near Brighouse, Yorks. He entered our ministry in 1801, and departed to his rest April 12, 1850, in the seventy-fourth year of his age, and the forty-ninth of his ministry. He was President of Conference in 1817, and again in 1837. He was a man of great moral worth and an author of eminent ability. "His expositions of Divine truth were remarkable for clearness, point, and accuracy, and his ministry was in a high degree instructive and edifying. As a controversialist he was keen, powerful, and convincing; as a theologian he was not only sound in the faith, but mighty in the Scriptures, and well acquainted with the works of standard divines. His published writings, which extend to several volumes, are of superior excellence, and are held in high estimation both within and beyond the pale of our denomination, as affording a highly valuable defence and illustration of many important truths."

The Rev. John Harrison was born in 1772 at Crosland Moor, near Huddersfield. He united with the Connexion at the time of the division, and laboured much as a good, useful, local preacher. In 1805 he became fully employed in the work of the ministry, and continued in circuit work thirty-

two years. At the Chester Conference in 1820 he was raised to the presidency. "I have cast anchor and am safe," was his answer to a relative shortly before he finished the voyage of life, on Thursday, June 17, 1850.

The Rev. William Salt was a native of Stanton-by-Dale, on the borders of Derbyshire. When at the Leeds Conference in 1850, owing to declining health, he requested superannuation. He had laboured in the ministry for forty-one years. In 1827 he published a "Memorial of the Methodist New Connexion," which had an extensive sale. In joyful hope he departed, February, 1851, aged sixty-six years.

The Rev. George Wall was called out as a Circuit preacher in 1797, and declared the glad tidings for more than forty years. In his sermons he addressed especially the judgment and the affections. His attachment to the principles and institutions of the Connexion was remarkably tenacious. Few had a higher Connexional reputation. He was three times chosen to the office of President. He died in unclouded peace, at Lightcliffe, March, 1852, in the seventy-eighth year of his age.

The Rev. William Burrows was born in Nottingham, January 2, 1799. In early life he was deeply impressed by reading the autobiography of the first John Nelson. In 1823 he became a Circuit preacher. He greatly enjoyed the atmosphere of revivals, and was wont to exert himself amidst scenes of multiplied conversion, until he was ready to faint from exhaustion. His anxiety respecting the success of his ministry was extreme, and led him to reproach himself with inefficiency while others were rejoicing in the large fruits of his labours. He slept in Jesus, December, 1852.

Rev. Thomas Waterhouse was born in 1780, at a small village about six miles from Selby, in Yorkshire. When about nineteen, when attending the ministry of the Wesleyans in Hull, he was gradually drawn into fellowship with God and His people. Soon after the division, as the result of reflection, he left the Wesleyans and joined the ranks of the fathers and founders of the Methodist New Connexion. He began his ministerial course at Alnwick in 1802—a course which comprehended fifty-one years of active

and uninterrupted service. His sermons were richly stored with the essential verities of the gospel, and his delivery was distinguished by unusual fervency. In the devotional service of the sanctuary, also, he was remarkable for freedom and ardour. And the earnestness in supplication with thanksgiving, which was one of his chief characteristics throughout life, made itself seen and felt like a glowing fire in his last official act, a week before his death—the offering of the opening prayer at the Ordination Service at Longton in 1853. He was thrice honoured to preside over his brethren in Conference.

While the Deed Poll declares the religious doctrines of the Connexion to be unalterable, by an important clause provision is made for effecting every seventh year any changes in the polity and discipline of the Denomination which may be deemed necessary or expedient.

The provision is definitively prescribed and guarded from abuse. The proposed alterations must be published and submitted to the consideration of the Circuits at the Septennial date, but cannot be made, unless two-thirds in number of the members of the Conference next following such publication decide to adopt them. This revising power was first applied in the years 1853 and 1854, and the use then made of it showed that ministers and Churches, whilst fully conscious of liberty to modify the system, adhered cordially to its essential principles and rules. Among the proposals on which the judgment of the circuits was sought was a change of our Connexional name for one more definite and expressive. It appeared that there was not sufficient agreement in favour of any of the suggested designations, and indeed that many circuits were not strongly desirous of any change whatever. No action was taken, therefore, and discussion of the question ceased.

The year 1854 was thought a fitting time for presenting to the Rev T Allin a substantial proof of the affection and esteem in which he was held by the community. The Conference appointed a committee to receive subscriptions and to arrange for the presentation of the testimonial, and the committee having completed their work, a public

meeting was held in Peter Street, Manchester, on October 18th, when Mr. John Ridgway, as chairman of the committee, handed to Mr. Allin a beautiful gold watch, with a purse containing about £800. In the course of a suitable address the President of the Conference, Rev W Mills, who occupied the chair, said that "when Mr. Allin had entered the Connexion it soon became evident that he possessed intellectual endowments and moral qualities which gave promise that he would rise to the highest order in the ministry of the Church of Christ. Well had Mr. Allin fulfilled these promises and become a burning and shining light. His popularity caused him to be much engaged in promoting the interests of the various institutions of the Connexion, and in defending the great principles of the Christian faith. During this period of active labour Mr. Allin prepared and delivered his magnificent discourses on 'The Immateriality and Immortality of the Soul,' 'The Character and Folly of Modern Atheism,' and 'The Necessity of a Divine Revelation.' In consequence of impaired health, he was obliged to relinquish the regular duties of the ministry, but it pleased God still to spare his life, and he has since rendered important service in the pulpits of the Connexion and in training young men for the ministry. Such services as these, performed in so fine a spirit and during so long a period, excited a desire to present to Mr. Allin a substantial mark of the esteem in which he is held in the Connexion." Speeches of appreciation and eulogy were delivered by Revs. P. J. Wright, W. Cooke, J. Stacey, Mr. J. Ridgway, and others. In acknowledging the presentation Mr. Allin said: "What gives this testimonial its highest value in my estimation is the fact that it is the gift of a Christian community—of that community with whose religious views, institutions and interests I have most fully identified myself, and which I have ever delighted to serve from the time when I first became acquainted with its principles to the present moment. I have happiness in knowing that I have a place in the esteem and prayers of any who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. But with such a testimony as this evening supplies that I have a

high place in the esteem and affection of my Christian brethren throughout the Connexion, whether in the ministry or out of it, the happiness derived from this quarter, as indeed it ought to be, is complete, and added to the approving testimony of my own conscience, and the felt approval of the God of conscience, it leaves me nothing more to pray for or expect."



REV. T. ALLIN.

Mr Allin held till 1860—for it may be well to complete here our notice of his great career—the office of General Secretary of Missions, to which he was appointed in 1849, and with his relinquishment of this trust his public service of the Denomination came to a close. The resolution of the Conference on the occasion, after gratefully recognising the wisdom, fidelity, and earnestness with which he had discharged the duties of the office, continues : "The Conference

also records its deep sense of obligation to our venerable friend for that affectionate and fraternal spirit which has so eminently and uniformly characterised his intercourse with the committees of successive years, and by which he has so specially endeared himself to the missionaries and friends of this Society ; and while thus compelled to relinquish its claims on the official services of such a distinguished father in our Israel, the Conference earnestly prays that he may be long spared to assist the missions by his counsel and otherwise contribute to the honour and usefulness of the Connexion."

In 1864 Mr. Allin was visited with partial paralysis, and for a time death seemed to be at hand. In body he was prostrate, but his intellect, memory excepted, was unimpaired. Slowly his strength came back, in a measure, and with it power to express himself in tolerably distinct speech. During the whole of his affliction God drew near to him and made him "drink of the river of His pleasures." The Bible and the Hymn Book, constantly within his reach, filled him with comfort and joyful hope. "The childlike simplicity of trust," says the obituary—"the childlike freshness and fulness of religious joy which had characterised him through life continued with him until death, and were manifest as far as this was possible in death itself." "I have never known a more enviable death," says one who saw him die, and whose experience qualified him to report what he saw. "I do not think the shadow of a doubt or fear even rested upon him for a moment. And thus undoubting, and thus unfearing, he passed out of the valley whose darkness had been so graciously lit up for him into the glorious inheritance of the saints" on the 7th of November, 1866.

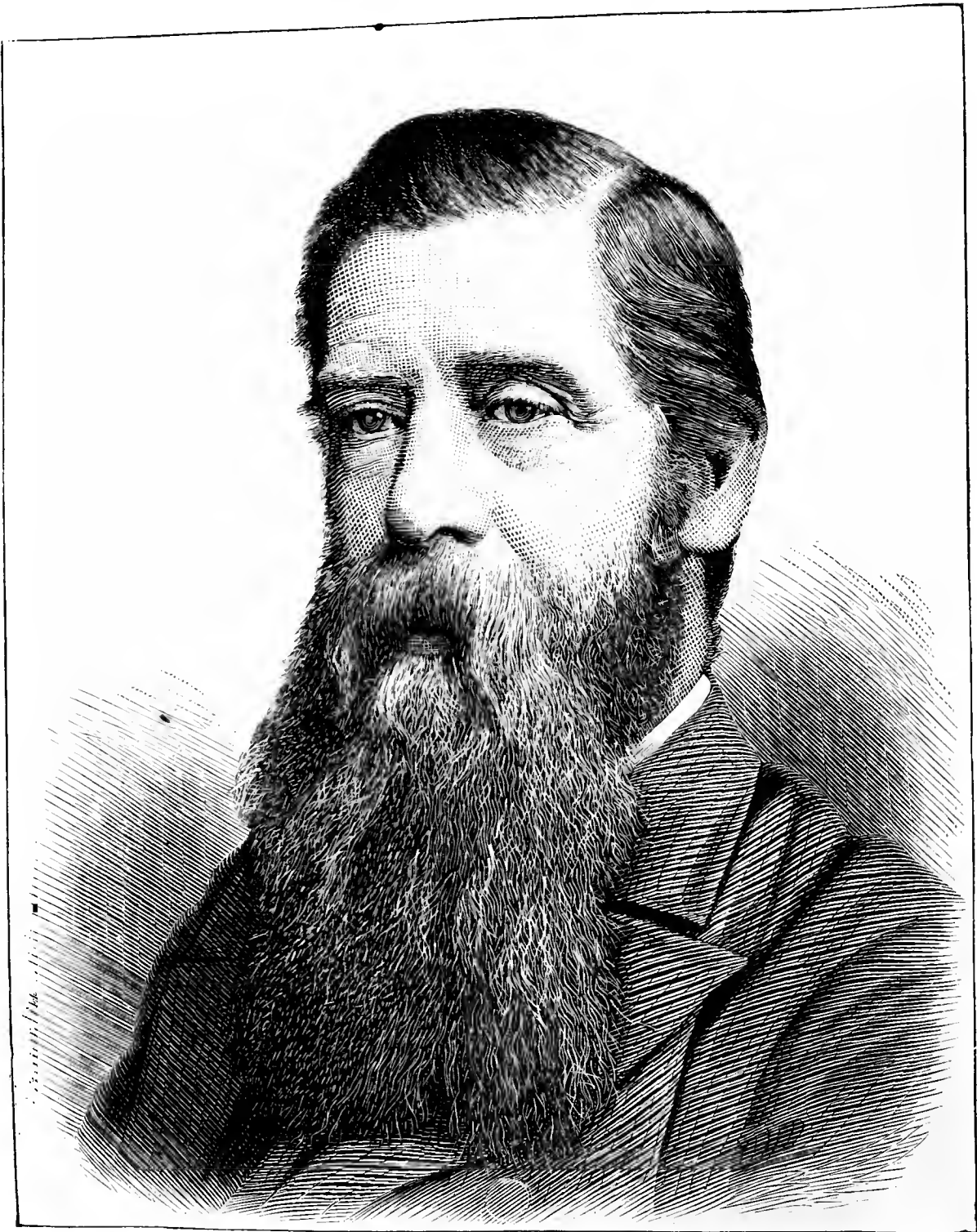
Returning to the course of affairs, at the session of 1855 the Conference declared its disapprobation of all State grants for the endowment of religious institutions, and resolved to co-operate with other bodies in resisting the continued imposition of Church Rates. It also expressed its gratitude for the special blessing which had rested upon its deliberations, and for the reviving influence shed down on various parts of the Connexion, which was revealing itself in general prosperity.

On the 17th of November in this year the Rev James Wilson peacefully expired, in the seventy-second year of his age, and the forty-third of his ministry. He was of Scottish descent, and his godly parents had the joy of witnessing his religious decision in early life. He was bent on acquiring knowledge for the sake of his public teaching, and as his library contained about four thousand volumes, he was able to enrich his mind from its stores. He interested himself in young men, and by loans of books and otherwise assisted many to serve the Church. He was chosen President in 1833, and a second time, on account of his well-known impartiality and prudence, in 1841, when Mr. Barker was tried and expelled.

The next two or three years supply little for our records. The rules of the Connexion give members who may be aggrieved by the decisions of local meetings or courts the right of appeal to the Annual Committee, which has authority to advise or interpose or refer the case to Conference. It is unnecessary to relate the circumstances under which this right was now exercised, but reference to the instance gives opportunity to say that the willingness to surrender such appellate jurisdiction which the Conference some years afterwards avowed, was a conditional willingness ; the surrender was specified as one of a number of concessions, which might be made to form a union of all the denominations of Methodism into one visible whole.

The year 1850, by extending our missionary operations, opened a new and auspicious era in the history of the Denomination. The Conference had long cherished a desire to sustain a direct relation to some heathen people, but the difficulty of meeting the demands of a foreign mission was allowed to defer action. At Hull, in 1858, the Conference decided to establish such a mission without further delay, and ordered inquiry to be made as to eligible spheres and their comparative claims. At Manchester, in 1850, China was selected as the most suitable field for our agents ; gifts to defray initial expenses were offered willingly, and in the autumn of that year, on October 18th, in Woodhouse Lane Chapel, Leeds, the Revs. John Innocent and William Nel-

thorpe Hall were set apart to publish the glad tidings in the vastest heathen country of the world. They left our shores



REV. JOHN INNOCENT.

on Friday, October 21st, and arrived at Shanghai, March 23, 1860. After full consideration, they directed their course to

North China and fixed on Tientsin, a large commercial city on the banks of the Pei-ho, as their permanent home and the base of their operations. The importance of Tientsin in a missionary aspect is scarcely conceivable. At no great distance from the capital, and but little inferior to Peking itself as a centre of intelligence, commercial activity, and social influence, having a population of more than half a million, its conversion to the Christian faith, so desirable in itself, would be an immense advantage to the general cause of evangelisation.

The earliest care of the pioneers was, of course, to provide machinery for their work. Mission buildings and dwelling-houses were erected, schools were commenced, places for the accommodation of native worshippers built or rented. A church was also built, in which English service was to be conducted for the benefit of foreign residents, who themselves bore much of the cost. The progress of the missionaries in the language enabled them to use it soon with persuasiveness and effect, and the constant earnestness with which the sight of so much need spurred them to labour was rewarded with results which in speed and measure surpassed expectations. A few dates and details may be of interest. The opening of our first city chapel, standing between a substantial structure called the Drum Tower and an idol manufactory, took place on May 9, 1862. On Sunday, June 1st, in the same year, two native converts were received into Church fellowship by baptism, these being the first fruits of the mission. Additions were gradually made, so that in 1863 we had eleven; in 1864 thirteen, in 1865 thirteen; in 1866 twenty-one, and in 1867 thirteen more. The spring of 1866 was marked by the opening of a large new chapel in a situation very favourable for usefulness. This short survey brings us to the commencement of the Shan-tung mission under remarkable circumstances.

Early in 1866 a stranger weighted with years, having entered the first of our Tientsin chapels, drew attention by his solemn and earnest manner. Invited in a friendly way to give some account of his appearance there, he said that he had come from a village of Chu-chia, 140 miles from Tientsin, in

search of wisdom as to God and a future life, and told of the anxiety he had felt to learn what lies beyond death, then nearing him as an old man. He told of a dream he had twice had of a glorious palace into which only the pure might enter—of his fruitless recourse for promised teaching to some Roman Catholics in his neighbourhood—of his visit to Tientsin to consult the priests for whose temple he had asked—of his direction by mistake to our chapel, and, finally, of his persuasion that he had found the truth for which he had been thirsting. Messengers were sent to the place whence he came, and the remarkable facts of his narrative were verified. It was found that a glorious work of awakening and conversion had broken out in the district and was still spreading, and that hence there was urgent need for Christian guides to conduct worship and impart instruction. With such clear indication of Laou-ling and other districts in Shan-tung as Divinely marked out for our diligent cultivation was our second mission in China founded, and with the encouragement of continual showers of prospering grace has it been continued.

As a reinforcement greatly needed, Rev W. B. Hodge reached China towards the end of 1866, and by strenuous devotion acquired in a short time so much of the language as enabled him to assist in the augmented work. The connection with the mission of one who accompanied him shortly ceased.

The first death in our Tientsin Church occurred about this time. It was the departure to be with Christ of Mr. Wang, father of the student Wang. "He had been identified with us about two years, and by his consistent walk had borne unequivocal testimony to the power of saving grace. It was delightful to witness the calm confidence with which he entered the dark valley and to listen to his expressions of gratitude to God that he had been brought under Christian influence. 'I feel,' he said, 'that the religion of the Bible is true. Its glorious assurances give me great joy in the prospect of death.' 'Oh!' he said to Mr. Hall one day, 'Jesus has prepared a place for me in heaven, and I am going home, going home.' During the year following two other members passed through the pearly gates, one of whom, just before breathing her last, said to her son, a faithful disciple, 'I am

going to be with Jesus. I know that He will receive me to Himself ; if I had died some years ago before hearing of Him, what would have become of my soul ? Cleave to Jesus all your life long, and then we shall meet again in glory ' ' Fore-runners these of myriads more who shall rise from dark and wretched China to the heaven of rest and glory

Considering the need for enlargement of agency, arising from extension of field, especially in view of the impaired state of Mr. Hall's health, the Conference of 1868 sent out Rev. B. B. Turnock, M.A., as a married missionary, to strengthen the northern branch of the mission. He arrived with Mrs. Turnock and Miss Landels, afterwards Mrs. Hodge, at Shanghai, October 16th, and proceeded thence to his post. Helped by his classical attainments, he soon had the power of using the language profitably in public.

The missionaries were disciplined to endure hardness " as good soldiers of Jesus Christ " by painful bereavements, failures of health, oppressive anxieties and occasional hardships. Nor by these only : perils were not wanting. While our own Mr. Hodge and the Rev James Williamson—a devoted agent of the London Missionary Society—were travelling by boat to Shan-tung to visit stations there, the latter met his death at the hands of a band of robbers on August 25, 1869. So imminent was the danger to which Mr. Hodge was exposed, as to make his narrow escape from the fate of his fellow-traveller a cause of surprise, not less than of devout joy. But his nervous system had received a shock which disabled him from work, and demanded a season of unbroken rest. The Laou-ling Churches were thus deprived of missionary oversight for several months ; yet so plentiful was the blessing bestowed on the labours of the native assistants that the accessions of hopeful converts were numerous beyond precedent. A more terrible tragedy was at hand.

In the midsummer of 1870 an outbreak of popular fury, which thrilled the world with horror, took place at Tien-tsin. For some weeks previously the attitude of the people towards foreigners was menacing, and alarming reports grew rife that they were to be beaten and killed. The excitement of the populace increased daily, and on the 21st of June a murderous

mob, besides damaging and destroying property, slaughtered upwards of twenty Europeans, chiefly French Roman Catholics, with atrocious ferocity. Native Christians of our own missions suffered spoliation at the rapacious hands of ruffians. Some of them were wounded, and one of them, after weeks of suffering, died from the injuries inflicted on him. In the midst of these distressing troubles the fidelity of the converts gave cause for praise and joy. Severe as was the testing-time, most of them nobly stood the trial.

In the autumn of 1869, after ten years' absence and arduous work in China, Mr. Innocent came to England on furlough. He was recovering from a dangerous illness and required relaxation and rest. The homeward voyage was beneficial to his health, so that during his visit, by sermons and speeches in many circuits, as well as at Conference, he excited the whole community to increased liberality, prayerfulness, and zeal. The return of himself and family in renewed vigour to China was accomplished exactly when his help could be of most avail in reorganising the mission.

Communications from the Rev. H. O. Crofts supplied clear evidence that the mission in Canada, so auspiciously begun, was on the whole in a prosperous state. Many parts of the country called for labourers, but labourers could not be found fully to cultivate the ground already possessed ; much less to improve new openings. The difficulties in management chiefly arose from this inability to undertake the enlarged exertions which necessities required and prospects encouraged. In 1851 the Rev. J. H. Robinson was called upon to succeed the Rev. H. O. Crofts as General Superintendent of the mission. "During his fifteen years' occupancy of that post he was," writes the Rev. J. C. Watts, D.D., "in labours more abundant. He loved the new country. Its glorious sense of freedom delighted him, and he speedily adapted himself to the new conditions in which he was placed. With much discretion and energy he devoted himself to the duties of his responsible office. He founded and edited a Connexional organ, *The Evangelical Witness*. Such was the esteem in which he was held by his brethren that he was four times elected President of the Canadian Conference, and his official

sermons at the respective Conferences were anticipated with much eagerness, for as a preacher he had few peers. His sermons were inspirations, rousing as the peals of the 'Marseillaise,' which calls to arms. As a Christian minister and as an eloquent temperance advocate, he travelled thousands of miles annually. The mission greatly prospered under his vigorous management, and he gained and maintained a conspicuously high reputation throughout the young Dominion."

The Conference having accepted the resignation of Mr. Robinson, presented in consequence of impaired health, Rev. W. Cocker, D.D., became his successor in 1866. The mission under his administration continued to prosper, progress was made in every department. The standard of ministerial qualification was raised. The city Churches gained strength from revival and increase. While a policy of consolidation was pursued the activity of expanding life was shown in the erection of new chapels and parsonages and the opening of new stations. From desire to share fraternally with the English Church in the work of evangelising the heathen, contributions were made in behalf of the mission to China. The *Evangelical Witness* retained its efficiency and enlarged its success. Early in February, 1871, Rev. W. Mc Clure, M.A., for many years theological tutor to the mission, finished his course. He had laboured for seventeen years in our ministry in Ireland, whence he emigrated to Canada, where for twenty-three years he served our Churches with ripe intelligence and zealous devotion.

In 1862 the Conference resolved to found a mission in Australia, and sent out Rev. J. Maughan as the first missionary. He commenced his labours in Adelaide, the capital of South Australia, intending it to be a centre of further operations in places around needing religious ministrations, and in confidence that an agent would shortly be appointed to Melbourne. Very soon the room taken at first for worship and preaching was found too small. Ground for a chapel was purchased, and a course of exertions opened by which £1,800 was raised by Adelaide friends toward the cost. The Sunday scholars in this country spontaneously undertook to aid in the erection, and raised £600 for this object. Presently

the building of a minister's house and the opening of a new cause at Hope Valley furnished other indications of progress. Two causes now interrupted this hopeful condition, the failure of Mr. Maughan's health, and the pressure of commercial distress in the colony. The financial difficulties were encountered with faith and patience ; the shattered health of Mr. Maughan required a voyage to England as the only means of prolonging his life. He arrived in the summer of 1869, and having rallied in some degree preached and addressed meetings in behalf of the mission as well as he was able, or rather, beyond his power, during the rest of the year. He was present at the following Conference, and, together with the Rev J. Innocent, received the hearty greetings and congratulations of the Conference upon his labours and achievements. Finding that he could not live in the changeable climate of his own country, he returned to the country of his adoption. His life peacefully ended at Adelaide, five months after his return, March 8, 1871.

The work in Melbourne was initiated in 1865 by the Rev. C. Linley, who remained there six years, and whose labour and success during that period indicated the presence and power of Divine blessing. The infant Church steadily progressed in numbers and in strength. The opening of a commodious chapel in a populous part of the city was followed by increase as great as could reasonably be expected. Then came financial trials arising from commercial depression in the colony. The mission, which branched out into three separate congregations, suffered also from the want of at least another missionary, a want which could not be supplied.

A review of the operations of the Irish Mission during this period discloses the solicitude of superintendents and their co-workers to spread evangelical religion as effectively as possible. We see the adoption of special measures to bring the children of the most degraded under the influence of Divine truth, and anon we witness a series of endeavours to teach and exemplify the gospel in its simplicity amid the blinding superstitions and corruptions of Romanism. If the results realised appear discouraging in view of the money expended and the labour employed, it may be suggested that

the results are but very partially shown in the statistics. Year after year evidence of spiritual usefulness is presented, but much of the good done disappears from view, the losses from removal and from emigration being constant and great. The seed sown in tears, though seemingly lost, is not really wasted, but discovers itself often in the lives of Christians who have gone to distant lands, and there "bring forth fruit unto God."

Concurrently with the institution of the Foreign Mission, arrangements were made for a gradual extension of our home operations. The Liverpool Conference of 1848, considering the appalling neglect of public worship and other marks of prevailing ungodliness, confessed its conviction of the duty of the denomination to increase and abound in aggressive work, and selected Bolton as the first of a series of new stations in populous towns presenting strong claims upon sympathy and zeal. From that time the policy of extending the Connexion by breaking up new ground became a subject of frequent deliberation, prompting to greater effort. In 1866 this department of activity was deemed sufficiently important to have a fund and management of its own; the chief object being to assist feeble and struggling circuits, and to establish mission churches in large and necessitous towns in which the Connexion had no interest. In support of the fund both public collections and private subscriptions were to be obtained. Under the new scheme very considerable advancement was made, the work carried out, and the results realised, showing at once the urgent need of such exertion and the gracious willingness of God to honour it with success.

An interesting incident of the Conference of 1859 was the presentation of an address to Mr. John Ridgway, with a full-length portrait of himself as a token of esteem for his character and of gratitude for his services. It belonged to Mr. Whittaker, of Higher Hurst, Ashton, on behalf of the subscribers, to present the testimonial. The following extract from the speech delivered on the occasion by the President of the Conference (Rev. Wm. Cooke) describes the force and firmness of Mr. Ridgway's denominational attachment.

"You, sir, have never deserted your principles, never forsaken the people of your early choice. You were with us a boy

at our origin ; you were with us to rejoice at our jubilate, and through a gracious providence you are with us still to celebrate with us our sixty-third Annual Conference, so that your personal history is coeval and commingled with the history of the Connexion, and a record of your life must largely embrace the events of our community. We cannot forget that your



MR. JOHN RIDGWAY, J.P., HANLEY.

honoured father was one of the venerable founders of the Connexion, and when but a rosy lad, you sat by his chair with those faithful men, listening to the pathetic narratives of their early struggles and sufferings. It was there you first imbibed our principles, which subsequent reflection confirmed and your whole life has illustrated. When our fathers worshipped in a little coach-house at Hanley you were there,

your youthful voice assisting to lead the devotions of the worshippers ; and when that humble sanctuary was displaced by a larger one you were still there ; and when that again had to give place for that magnificent temple, that noble cathedral, containing three thousand worshippers, you were still found in your place there. When you became a flourishing manufacturer and potter to the Queen, you were still a plain Methodist. When civic honours were poured upon you, and a Deputy-Lieutenancy of your county was added to the rest, you were still at your post, and with our people, a Methodist class-leader and local preacher. Others have left us either because we were poor and they were rich, or we were despised and they were honoured. In our poverty and our distress, in our pressing difficulties and deathlike struggles you were still our counsellor, our steadfast friend, and our generous supporter. Affluence and honours made no change in you, and our Connexional difficulties only made you cling the more closely to our interests, our principles, and the people who stood by them. Therefore, in honouring you, we are honouring our principles."

Mr. Ridgway, however, was far removed from exclusiveness. With a strong denominational preference he combined a warm catholicity of spirit. In declining years an affliction of some severity, and closer communion with the unseen and the celestial, by improving his milder qualities without abating his energy and vigour, gave to his character completeness and charm. His care for the prosperity of the Church suffered no diminution from age, and found emphatic expression in a letter which he wrote on the day before his death. Suddenly but gently the Master called him to higher service on December 3, 1860.

Two men of mark were taken from the ministerial ranks in 1859. The Rev. Simeon Woodhouse was born in Nottingham in 1787. He enjoyed the advantages of a religious training and received a good general education in a school where he had for a schoolfellow the Nottingham poet, Henry Kirke White. As a student he was diligent and persevering ; as a pastor attentive and sympathising ; as a ruler of the Church temperate and just ; as a teacher he had excellent gifts. He

was warmly and steadfastly attached to our community, was zealous in the maintenance of its principles and institutions, and deservedly held a high place in its ministry. He was chosen President of Conference in 1826, and a second time in 1839. He was also one of the guardian representatives.

The life of the Rev. William Ford, who died February, 1859, in the forty-second year of his ministry, presents a noble example of diligence in self-culture and activity in pulpit and pastoral duties. In the deliberations of Conference he took an influential part, as well as in the business of various committees. "The Chapel Fund," states the obituary record, "may be regarded as the offspring of his wisdom and energy. Here his eminent business aptitudes were conspicuously developed, and the last few years of his life, when no longer able to discharge the duties as a preacher in full service, were devoted to the establishment of this institution and to the administration of its affairs."

The Liverpool Conference of 1861 was made interesting by the second Septennial Revision of the General Rules. Regulations intended to heighten the character and increase the efficiency of the Sunday School were adopted, and it was resolved that the state of the schools should be regularly brought under the consideration of the District Meeting and the Conference. Among other important changes made was the increase of the number of the Annual Committee from seven to twelve. The year is also noteworthy as that in which the Rev. William Booth, now known as General Booth, resigned his ministry in the Connexion on finding that the Annual Committee would not allow him to evade the decision of Conference in relation to his discharge of the ordinary duties of a circuit minister. Mr. Booth was received amongst us as a minister on trial in 1854, and after the usual period of probation spent in London and Manchester and as an evangelist at large, was admitted into full Connexion at the Hull Conference of 1858. The Conference gratefully recognised his earnest labours, which had been honoured with showers of blessing. He continued to labour for three years longer in Halifax South and Gateshead Circuits. Then came his application to the Conference of 1861 to be freed

from ordinary ministerial duties and appointed as an authorised evangelist. The Newcastle District Meeting sustained the proposal. The Conference, after full deliberation, decided not to accede to the application, and appointed Mr. Booth to the superintendency of Newcastle-on-Tyne Circuit, declaring at the same time that any circuit, with the consent of the superintendent preacher, was at liberty to make arrangements with any of the ministers and their respective circuits for the purpose of holding services to revive the work of God. Mr. Booth, though he expressed to the Conference his dissatisfaction with the intended appointment as being irreconcilable with his evangelistic convictions, yet accepted it. Instead, however, of serving the circuit in the capacity of a regular minister, he left it to carry on services at a distance. The Annual Committee having called upon him to enter immediately upon his duties, he replied in a letter, received July 23rd, which placed his resignation in the President's hands. In this letter he gives his reason for not resigning at Conference before the final reading of the stations. "My first impulse," he writes, "was to resign, but I clung to the idea that my connection with the Conference might be retained another year without sacrificing my convictions, and I thought the arrangement with the circuit would secure this. In this hope, I find from your letter that I am mistaken, and that no plan is open to me by which I can work out those convictions and retain that connection." With this statement, and with the fact that the resignation was not received by the President till about eight weeks after Conference, it is hard to harmonise that part of the sensational account of the scene at the Conference, given in Mr. Booth-Tucker's life of the late Mrs. Catherine Booth, where it is said that Mr. and Mrs. Booth "hurried forth, met and embraced each other at the foot of the gallery stairs, and *turned their backs upon the Conference*, resolved to trust God for the future, come what might, and to follow out their conscientious convictions regarding his work" (p. 291). The italics are ours.

Viewed by itself, the assertion of anything like military rule over enlightened Christian people is surely undesirable, yet the amount of good which has been achieved by the vast

combination of devoted workers enrolled in the Salvation Army, paying allegiance to such control for the sake of the Name, may well excite adoring thankfulness as well as abounding joy. The overruling hand of God may, therefore, be clearly seen in all the causes which contributed to Mr. Booth's resignation; for, without disparagement to the Methodist New Connexion, it may be safely said that he could not have done the work reserved for him as the organiser of the Army, had he remained within its ministerial ranks. "It may well be questioned," observes Mr. Booth-Tucker, "whether it would have been possible to have manufactured an aggressive force such as the Salvation Army within the borders of *any* existing denomination" (p. 110).

The Rev. George Goodall was born at Hucknall, near Nottingham, on December 9, 1795. Before manhood was reached, he was received on trial as a local preacher. In this office he soon gave evidence of fitness for one of wider usefulness. He commenced his career as a Circuit minister in 1819 and continued to run his active course till 1852, when impaired health compelled him to seek rest as a supernumerary, after a service of thirty-three years. In 1840, during his ministry in Dudley, where he spent three years, he was chosen President of Conference. The next year he was entrusted with the superintendency of the Irish Mission. In 1849 he was appointed a guardian representative of the Connexion, to fill up the first vacancy which took place in the original number. Having lived in the warm affection of the people and in the confidence of brethren in the ministry, he entered into his rest September 2, 1861.

In 1862 the foundation stone of the College was laid. The establishment of a college for the education of suitable men for the work of the ministry was long under consideration. As far back as 1832 the Conference recorded its judgment in favour of such an institution, but various circumstances at that early period occasioned hesitation and delay. The financial responsibilities of the project were thought to be too great, and among both ministers and people some feared that such a systematic provision would promote learning at the expense of godliness, and might interfere with the Divine

prerogative in the choice of instruments. As years pass away, however, the wisdom of the design becomes more evident. The conviction spreads and roots itself that, in conjunction with piety, culture and training are most desirable qualifications for service and success in the ministry, and that simplicity and zeal of candidates need not decline in the educational process. In 1846 the Conference resolves to appropriate a portion of the Jubilee Fund towards the founding of a college for young ministers as soon as practicable, and though hindrances postpone the accomplishment of the object, it is henceforth kept in full view. In 1856 the Conference appoints the Committee to prepare a scheme and to ascertain what funds can be raised for founding and sustaining a training institution, and to report. The Committee attends to the instructions and reports, but that is all; new difficulties emerge, and the project is again deferred to be accomplished in more favourable times. Soon, however, the realisation of the long-cherished desire takes place, in consequence of a more mournful and unexpected occurrence—the early and lamented death of one whose wealth has already assisted to fit several young men for ministerial duties.

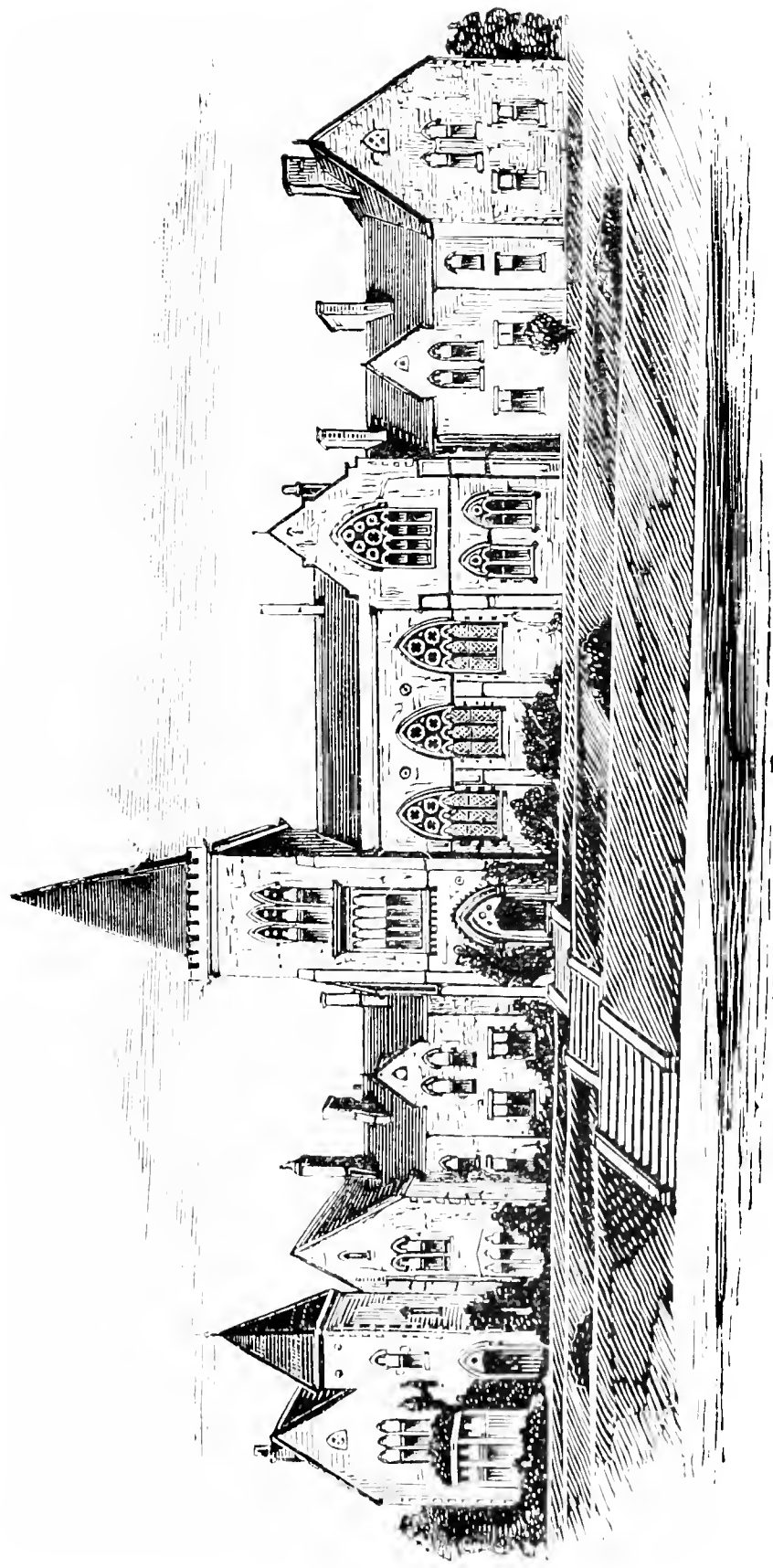
Mr. Thomas Firth was born in Sheffield, June 21, 1821. He was religiously taught and trained, and from early life walked with God and found pleasure in doing good to others. Conscientiousness and benevolence, industry and decision, consecrated and crowned by devoutness, were the leading features of his character and course. He possessed a measure of mechanical genius and had a fair knowledge of some branches of science, particularly of chemistry, and was hence qualified to co-operate with his brothers, especially with Mr. Mark Firth, in founding and developing their large and flourishing business as steel manufacturers. His strength of conviction and tenacity of purpose were equal to the achievement of almost anything he undertook. Alike in spiritual and in secular pursuits, he was stable in purpose and persistent in effort. His usefulness was much indebted to his ardent and persevering qualities. His benevolence, partaking of his constitutional activity and firmness, was

always abounding. As a faithful and wise steward of the ample means committed to him, he was carefully methodical in his liberalities. Instead of concentrating his gifts on a few objects, he gave according to scale to many. He assisted public charities and gave generously to individuals in private ; he encouraged both philanthropic and religious causes ; he sought to cheer good workers in distant lands, and helped such labourers in his immediate neighbourhood. Nor was



MR. THOMAS FIRTH, SHEFFIELD.

there less of spontaneous ease in the flow of his bounty because it was thus ruled by proportion. When the way to amass wealth was opening before him, to guard against an undue desire of accumulation, he soberly resolved always to give to religious and benevolent causes at least a tenth of his income. The resolution was a solemn vow, and faithfully was it kept. His constitution, never one of the strongest, gave way under a rapid succession of attacks of sickness. In his last affliction he was not untroubled by temptation, but



RANMOOR COLLEGE, SHEFFIELD.

his faith triumphed. Two days before his death he said "I have perfect peace." He died, March 20, 1860, in his thirty-ninth year. Brief as was his course, it was sufficient to develop a character of multiform goodness and far-reaching usefulness.

The question in what way principally he should honour God with his substance had long occupied the mind of Mr. Thomas Firth, and the conclusion in which he rested was that he should use his money to the best and highest result by applying it to train men for a successful ministry of the gospel. Acting on this conviction, he contributed liberally for the education of several young men for the ministry of our own Churches, hoping he would in this way dispose our people to erect and endow "a regular theological institute." He often looked forward to the joy which he believed he should have in watching the operations of such an institution ; and when as by prophetic suggestion the thought stole over him that he might not be permitted this satisfaction—that the Lord might call him while in his prime to service above—he provided for the event, and gave legal effect to the resolution he had long formed, to devote a portion of his wealth as a college endowment. When, upon his departure, it became known that he had nobly bequeathed five thousand pounds for the support of a Preparatory Institution, on condition that the building should be established within four years from his death, the desire for a college was changed into a purpose to arise and build. The Liverpool Conference of 1861 took up the business with earnestness, and opened a subscription with a view to raise six thousand pounds for the purchase of land in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, and the erection of a suitable structure. More than half the proposed amount was promptly and cheerfully subscribed. The foundation stone of the building was laid by Mr. Mark Firth on Thursday, September 25, 1862, and in the evening of the same day an enthusiastic meeting was held in the Cutlers' Hall. The College was opened with fitting solemnities on Monday, April 18, 1864.

The building occupies a commanding situation at Ranmoor, one of the finest suburbs of Sheffield. It stands upon the

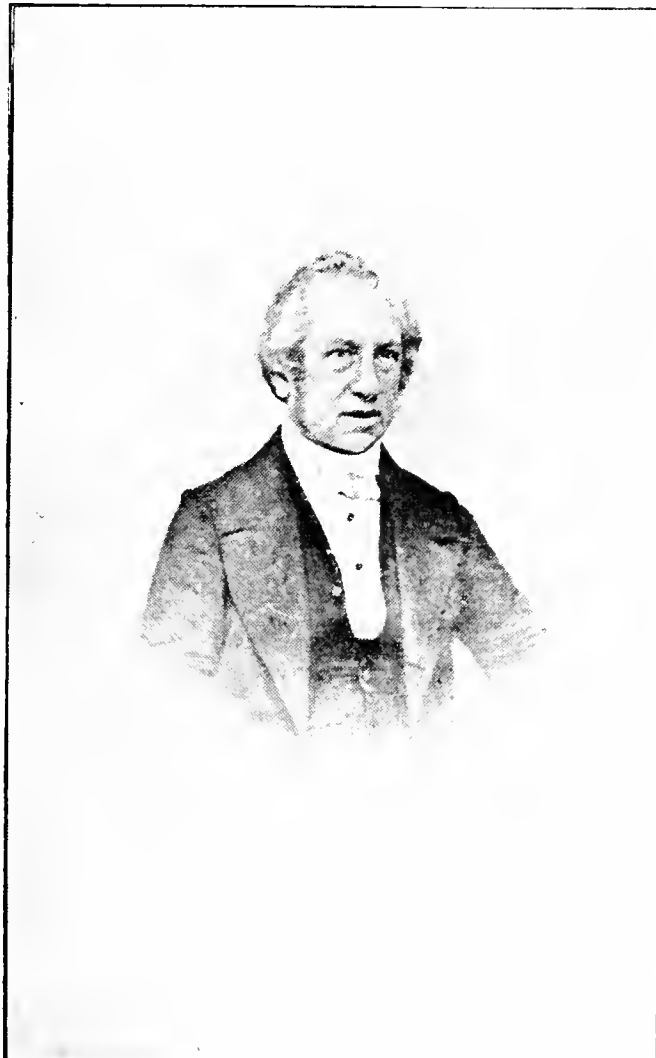
slope of the hill, and has connected with it about two acres of land laid out in terraces and tasteful plots. It is designed in the Collegiate Gothic of the fourteenth century, and has an imposing and beautiful aspect. It affords accommodation for sixteen students, and admits of enlargement as circumstance may require. In the centre of the building is a spacious library; at the western end, the residence of the Principal. The entire cost of site, building, and furnishing, which was nearly nine thousand pounds, was raised many years since and the Endowment Fund has been gradually increased to upwards of eight thousand pounds.

Of the operations of the College from the beginning some account will be given in the remaining chapter.

In the spring of 1863 the Rev. Philip James Wright, a ministerial leader of merited distinction, and one of the writers of the Jubilee Volume, closed his useful life in holy peace. He was born in London, May, 1810. In early life, while worshipping with the Wesleyan Methodists in Southwark Circuit, he was brought to God through the ministry of the younger Rev. Richd. Treffry. His penitential sorrow was prolonged and heart-filling, and when the sense of forgiveness came, it came with enlarging joy and much assurance. The agitation known as the Leeds Organ Controversy of 1827, led him to consider differences of Church polity, and as the result he withdrew from his first spiritual home and united with our denomination, with a fixed conviction of the Scripturalness of its distinguishing principles. He entered our ministry in 1832, and soon became known as an earnest and eloquent preacher of righteousness. "His method of treatment was expository and practical rather than argumentative. The truth was clearly stated; occasionally argued and established; beautifully, often brilliantly, illustrated; and, being delivered with a firm, ringing voice and animated manner, the attention of his hearers was both excited and sustained, while the faithful appeal, surcharged with the burning feelings of the preacher's heart, bore the message oftentimes to the sinner's conscience with convincing power. To preach the gospel was His delight. He gave himself wholly unto it. His work absorbed him."

In committees and in Conference he was one of the readiest and ablest debaters. In 1852 he was chosen President of Conference at Huddersfield. In 1859 he was elected guardian representative. While his bow seemed to abide in strength, weakness and suffering befell him, and after a few days of exhaustive pain he died in victorious hope of eternal life.

The Rev. Joseph Livingston was born near Banbridge, in



REV. P. J. WRIGHT.

the province of Ulster, June, 1780. He was of Presbyterian parentage. At this distant period no information with respect to his entrance into the Connexion can be obtained. He began his ministry in 1811, and discharged its duties until 1840. In many of our circuits his success was manifest. At the Ashton Conference in 1838 he was elected to the chair. His protracted life came to a close January 31, 1864.

The Rev. William Mills was born at Ashton, October, 1813. He was gradually drawn to Christ by the ministry of the Rev. David Barker, aided by the early religious advantages of home. His mental powers were vigorous, and his diligence in the improvement of them great. Expectations as to his future usefulness were thus excited, and they were not disappointed. In 1834 he was stationed at Bolton as a minister on trial. His sermons were thoughtful and well arranged, and his delivery of them fluent and powerful. In the work of Connexional committees his full knowledge of rules and usages and his wisdom in counsel were justly esteemed. His judgment and fidelity in the office of President in 1854 afforded general satisfaction. He was the first Secretary to the College. Failure of health compelled him to request superannuation while comparatively young. After being thus relieved from Circuit work, he continued to preach as he had strength and opportunity. Broken sentences indicating his trust in Christ were all that the character of his last illness would allow. His last words, uttered in a mere whisper, were, "Jesus! Jesus! come! come!" He died November 2, 1864, aged fifty-one.

The Conference of 1866, presided over by the Rev. Samuel Hulme, adopted resolutions on Methodist Union which kept the subject before the attention of the community for a succession of years. For a comparative statement of the various Methodist polities the reader is referred to that part of this volume which specially treats of our relations to other Methodist Churches.

The Rev. Christopher Atkinson was brought to God in a blessed revival of religion in Sheffield. Soon after the Connexion was formed he became a member of the Scotland Street Church. At the Conference of 1807 he was received on trial for the ministry, and commenced a course of labour which was extended over forty-nine years. His knowledge of Scripture was familiar and full, and his active imagination and abounding humour made both his sermons and speeches attractive and interesting. He was elected President at the Halifax Conference of 1829. He entered into rest May 15, 1866.

The Rev. Henry Watts, father of the Rev. J. C. Watts, D.D., was born in London in midsummer of the first year of the century ; but being early left an orphan was brought up near Hucknall. His conviction of guilt and conversion took place in his sixteenth year. His experience of forgiveness led him to try to save some, and at length constrained him to enter the full ministry, in which he continued for about thirty-six years. He had a zeal for God, loving care for the household of faith, and could bear gently with the ignorant and erring. He filled the presidential chair at Chester in 1856.

The Rev. Thomas Scattergood, born at Bromsgrove, near Birmingham, entered our ministry in 1813, and continued actively engaged in it until 1853, when he became a supernumerary. He was stationed in many of our chief circuits. In his preaching he sought out no novelty either in topics or in modes of discussion. In Conference debate he was sometimes abrupt and dogmatic, but in social converse he was affable, and towards the afflicted and the poor tender and sympathising. He was a guardian-representative, and was once elected President of Conference. He died May 16, 1867.

The third Septennial Revision of the General Rules of the Denomination was completed at Longton in 1868. The most important of the alterations which there received sanction related to the time-limit of a minister's appointment to a Circuit. After full consideration, it was resolved that a married preacher, provided the minister and Quarterly Meeting request it, may remain a third year at the discretion of Conference ; and provided the minister and two-thirds of the Quarterly Meeting request it, may remain a fourth and a fifth year at the discretion of Conference. A single minister, in like manner and for special reasons to be approved by Conference, may remain a second year.

In December, 1869, the Rev. William Shuttleworth passed away, aged eighty-five. His first appointment was to Chester in 1811. In 1827, the year of his presidency, he was appointed Editor and Book Steward, which offices he held for thirteen years. In 1840 the offices were divided, and Mr. Shuttleworth continued to serve as Book Steward three years longer. In

1844 he was superannuated. His interest in the prosperity of the magazines never declined. He was the author of several works : "The Speculum Sacrum; or, the Minister's Companion" ; an "Essay on Evil Speaking" ; "Thoughts on Stephen's Dying Prayer," &c.

The Conference of 1871 resolved that a special effort should be commenced at the earliest convenient period and advanced as rapidly as possible to raise moneys to extinguish the Chapel Fund debt. The sum of £4,672 was raised, by which the debt, amounting to £3,950, was paid off, the surplus being appropriated to the payment of promised grants.

The Rev. James Henshaw was born at Hanley, Staffordshire, in May, 1804. The Conference of 1825 received him as a minister on probation. His ministry was expository and practical. He was a diligent pastor, maintaining friendly intercourse with all classes of the Church and congregation. Whilst mild and conciliatory in temper, he was firm in circuit administration. In 1848 he was chosen to the position of President, and discharged its duties well. His last years were passed at Alnwick, where he rendered valuable service. He calmly finished his useful course December 10, 1871, in the sixty-eighth year of his age.

In the opening month of 1872 the Rev. Charles Hibbert died in faith. He was born December 12th, at Hooley Hill, where he was converted when about fifteen years of age. He was received as a preacher on probation in 1835, and pursued his work in various Circuits with great regularity. In 1868 he was elected President of Conference. His death, which was sudden and unexpected, found him ready; "for he was a good man, full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith."

Here end the notices of ministers of official distinction whose deaths belong to this portion of our history. A similar recognition of others is precluded by want of space; but an enumeration of their mere names, which is all that is possible, need not be thought an unprofitable insertion. It is likely that every name in the following series will be interesting to some readers as an index to prized traditions or personal reminiscences. Excepting deceased ministers already men-

tioned, the list includes all who died during the third period of our century :—

Jonathan Tate (in the year 1847).	Thos. G. Robey (1862).
Ralph Waller (1848).	John Lyons (1865).
John Hilton (1851).	Wm. Innocent (1865).
Wm. Seaton (1852).	John Nicholas (1865).
Wm. Hughes (1852).	Thos. Seymour (1866).
Peter W Greaves (1853).	Benj. M. Scott (1866).
John Bensley (1853).	Geo. Wood (1866).
Benj. Earnshaw (1854).	James Haslam, M.A. (1868).
Wm. Jones (1858).	Josiah Howard (1869).
Thos. Ridge (1858).	John Nelson (1869).
Chas. S. Moore (1859).	Thos. W Fish (1870).
Thos. Griffiths (1860).	James Wright (1870).
Chas. Bootman (1860).	Wm. J. Wallis (1870).
Andrew Lynn (1861).	Wm. Wright (1870).

The statistics presented to the Conference in 1872 were as follows : 155 Circuits and mission stations, 271 Circuit preachers and missionaries, 1,303 local preachers, 667 chapels, 30,973 members, 78,670 Sunday scholars. These returns, it may be seen, exhibit gratifying increase under every head : Increase of Circuits and mission stations, 74 ; of Circuit preachers and missionaries, 131 ; of local preachers, 527 ; of chapels, 336 ; of members, 11,511 ; of Sunday scholars, 42,763.

CHAPTER IV

1872—1897

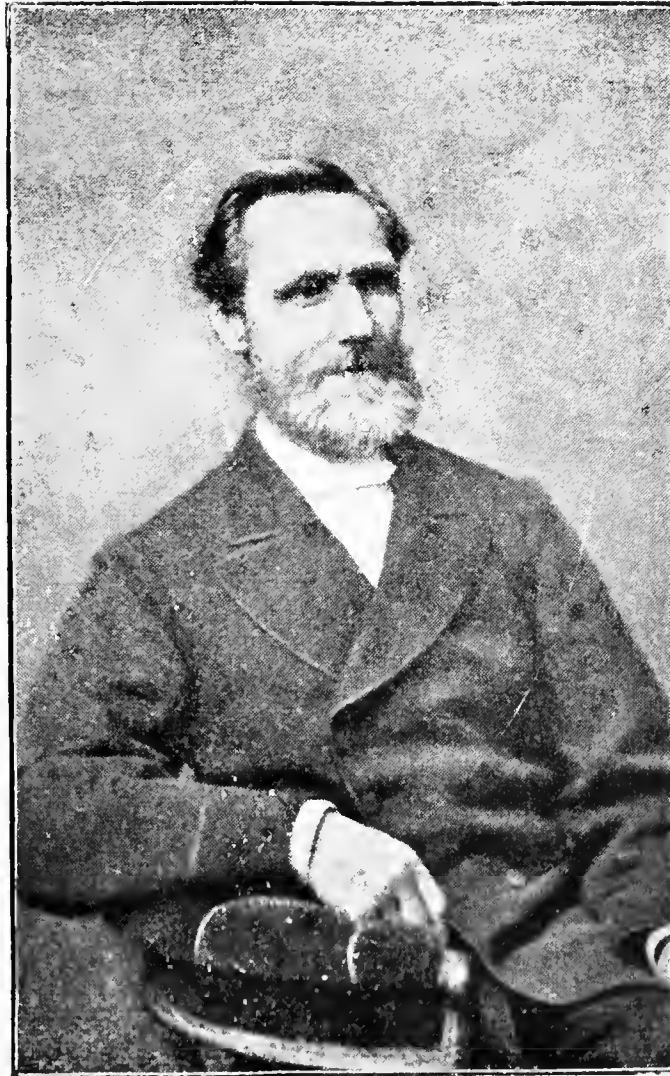
EVEN if the space at our disposal permitted, the characters and events which pertain to this last division of our denominational century could not with propriety be depicted as fully as those of remoter years. It must suffice to give only a very summary account of men and things.

Missions in China.—Closely following the massacre, troubles came upon the Tien-tsin mission from furious rain storms and devastating floods, by which myriads of the province were plunged into wretchedness. The mission, notwithstanding, rapidly assumed an aspect of encouragement scarcely inferior to the promise of former days. The continued accession of new converts, and the entrance of several students of a theological class on the work of the ministry, gave the missionaries good reason to “thank God and take courage.”

Of the conversion and subsequent course of Wang Hsien Seng, who died about this time, the reports and chronicles give accounts full of interest. A man well versed in Chinese literature, proud of his Confucian beliefs and prejudices till he was over sixty years of age, he became a spiritual, lowly, yet steadfast follower of Christ. His keenness and vigour as a champion of the truth; his eloquence and power as a preacher of the gospel; the dignity of his manners; and above all his high Christian character, gave him a patriarchal position and influence amongst the Churches of Tien-tsin.

In the autumn of 1873 the Rev. Wm. B. Hodge returned to China and resumed work at Tien-tsin; prolonged furlough in England having to appearance so far renewed his health

as to justify his reappointment. With the heart of a true missionary he gave himself for some years to labour, till debility and suffering made a second return to England necessary as the only means of possible recovery. In great weakness he reached Gateshead, whence, after a few weeks of comfort in affliction, he was raised to his reward, January, 1879. His name will be cherished by many, both in this



REV. W. N. HALL.

country and in China, whom he was instrumental in leading to the Saviour.

The Rev. Wm. N. Hall, after an absence of fourteen years, returned to England by way of Canada and the United States. He arrived in Sheffield, his native town, December, 1873. He came to recruit his strength, but also to forward the design of building an institution for the training of native

converts as preachers and pastors. The Conference of 1874 authorised the Committee to place the project before the Connexion, and to avail itself of the services of Mr. Hall in promoting its success. Very liberal was the response to his appeals. The late Mr. Joseph Love, the late Mr. Mark Firth, and his brother, yet living, Mr. Edward Firth, each subscribed £500; others less able nobly contributed; the total of subscriptions and collections amounting to £3,208. By the resources thus provided a beautiful and commodious range of buildings was reared, capable of accommodating eighteen or, when needful, twenty-four students. In 1876 Mr. Hall returned to China, where famine, resulting in terrible distress, was prevailing all over the northern provinces. The suffering in Shan-tung was indescribable. Foreign residents in Tien-tsin, Pekin, Hong-Kong, and Shanghai gave liberally to rescue the famishing, and placed most of the relief in the hands of missionaries for distribution where the famine was most prevalent. Mr. Hall was amongst the very foremost in unsparing effort to mitigate the distress, and had his reward as he saw how God employed the awful visitation, and the helpful Christian sympathy which it excited, to lead multitudes of pagans to give up their idols and welcome the gospel of goodwill.

Though at times he seemed overwrought and exhausted by arduous labours and by oppressive cares connected with the Training Institution, it would not have surprised his brethren in China had many years of active service awaited him. But his work was done. Typhus fever was very rife through the famine, and first Mrs. Hall, and next her husband, were seized by it. After lying prostrate for weeks Mrs. Hall recovered, but not till, during her unconscious state, she had become a widow. Mr. Hall's illness reached its swift and fatal termination, May 14, 1878, in the fiftieth year of his age. His death saddened the whole foreign settlement, and filled the hearts of the Chinese with sorrow, while at home those who knew him mourned his loss as deeply as though he had but lately left our shores. Long will he be held in loving remembrance for his exemplary life, his diffusive fervour, his ready and warm sympathy, his eloquent tongue and

persuasive pen, his energy and devotedness as the servant of Christ.

In 1877 the Rev. John Robinson embarked for China to strengthen the hands of Mr. Hodge, then labouring in Shan-tung ; while, to complete the original scheme of foreign work, Mr. D. Stenhouse was sent at the same time as a medical missionary. Next year the Conference, having regard to the rapid expansion of the work in Shan-tung, appointed the Rev. George T. Candlin as a reinforcement of the staff. In 1879 the death of Mr. Hodge, following that of Mr. Hall, made the appointment of another necessary, and the Rev. John Hinds was selected and sent forth.

At the beginning of 1880 the Rev. B. B. Turnock, M.A., who was sent out in 1868, but had to return after a few years in broken health, which, however, became so far repaired that he laboured with efficiency in several home circuits, was received into the unsuffering and everlasting kingdom. During the tragedy of 1870, he took charge of the women and children on the mission settlement, and kept half-watch at the mission premises, once or twice watching from dark till daybreak. For a short time he was Classical Tutor of our College. His modesty and gentleness, which were as visible as his gifts, endeared him to all who knew him.

The report of 1881 tells of the death of Mr. Hu, "a man of remarkable gifts and attainments, as well as of sincere and fervent piety, exercising a widespread and commanding influence as an able and eloquent preacher of the grace of God. He commenced his labours in our mission nearly twenty years ago, and was the first native evangelist to preach Jesus Christ in the large city of Tien-tsin." The Conference of the same year also deploras the early death of Miss Innocent, who had been set apart as Lady Superintendent of the Girls' School in China, such an institution having been sanctioned in the belief that it would prove a valuable auxiliary in the work of evangelisation. In 1888 Miss Waller, daughter of the late Rev. Ralph Waller, one of our holiest and most useful ministers, was appointed to the office, and held it for a few years.

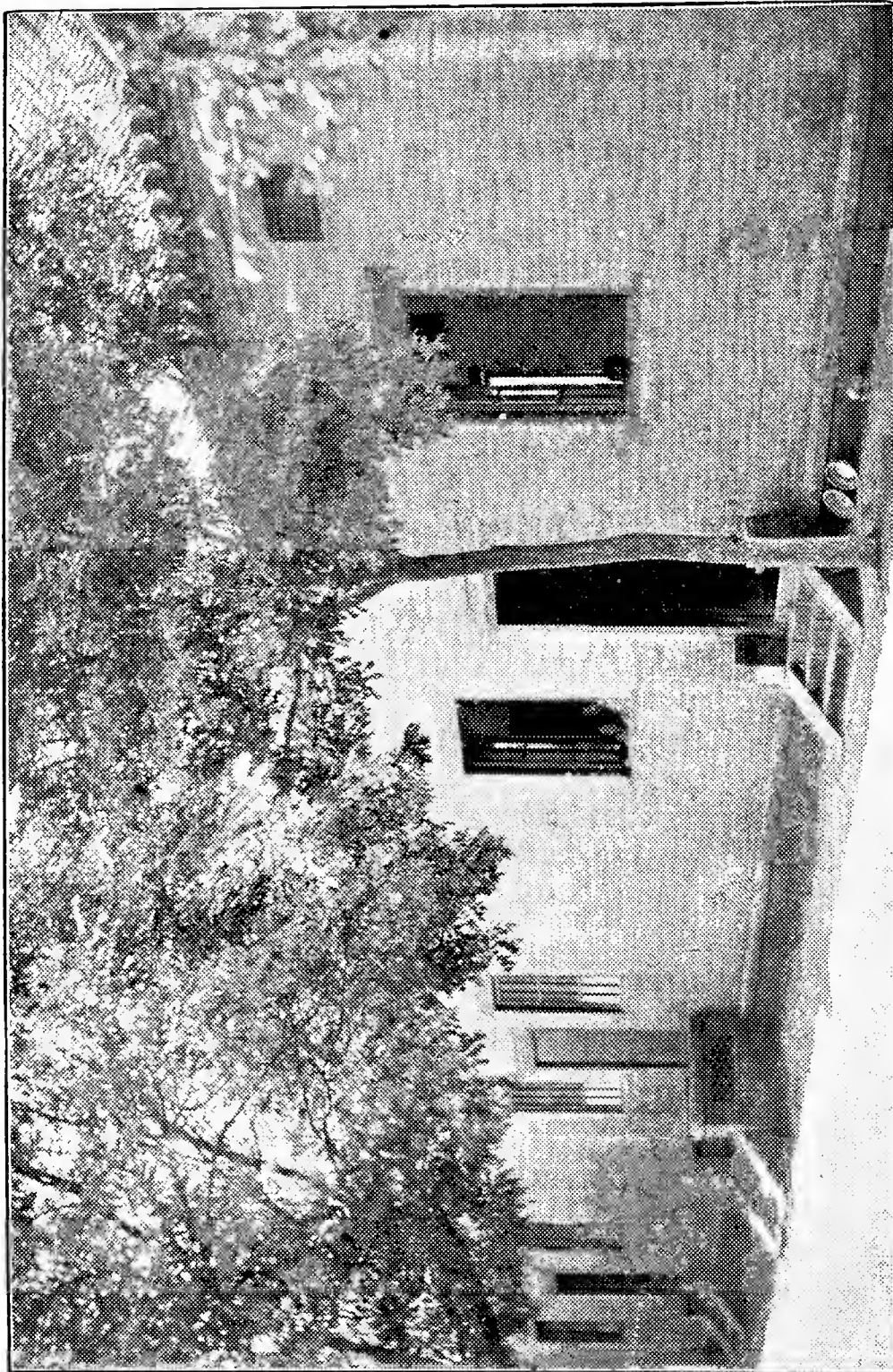
In 1882 the Rev. George M. H. Innocent, son of the Rev

John Innocent, was accepted, and sent to strengthen the mission staff in China. He spent himself in devoted service, earning by his loving labour the warm gratitude and esteem of the Chinese. In 1891 he returned on furlough. Having passed some months among friends he and his young wife, accompanied by Rev. G. T. Candlin and family, left the port of London to return to China. On the voyage he was seized with illness, which proved fatal on May 30, 1892.

In 1884 Kai-ping station was made a new Circuit. Kai-ping is about six miles from Tang-san, distant from Tien-tsin about seventy English miles. The district lies at the base of the eastern mountain range of North China, and contains some of the richest minerals. The mining and other works situated at Tang-san are remarkable in a commercial view. The places comprised in this region were committed first to the care of Rev. J. Hinds, assisted by Dr. Aitken as medical missionary. Mr. Hinds, after six years' service there, was succeeded by Rev. F. B. Turner, whose offer to labour was accepted in 1887. In this our youngest circuit, as in the others, a delightful measure of prosperity has been realised.

The Conference of 1887 accepted also the offer of Dr. W. W. Shrubshall as a medical missionary for Lao-ling or Shan-tung district. After six years' successful labour he returned, and, in hope that he may be in a position to resume work in China, the Conference appointed Dr. Young, recommended by the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, to fill for a short time the vacant place. The same Conference authorised the Committee to send Dr. F. W. Marshall to labour in China as a medical missionary.

In each branch of our Chinese mission—Tien-tsin, Shan-tung, and Kai-ping—the progress of years has been accompanied by a steady development of all the apparatus which ministers to the advancement of Christianity, and testifies to missionary purpose, liberality, and zeal. With a training institution doing excellent work in preparing native converts to preach Christ to their native countrymen; with Bible women, catechists, and other workers among adults; with teachers and schools for children and youth of both sexes;



MISSION HOSPITAL, CHU CHIA, SHAN-TUNG, CHINA—EXTERIOR.

The window to the left of the door partly hidden by tree trunk contains the "Eccles," "Salem," "Edwin Lumby," and "Ethel Stacey" cots.



MISSION HOSPITAL, CHU CHIA, SHAN-TUNG, CHINA—INTERIOR.

One of the Wards : Dr. Shrubshall second figure on the left. This Hospital accommodates about forty patients. Operating room in the centre of the Hospital and Wards on either side.

and with qualified medical missionaries, having the help of hospitals and dispensaries for practising the healing art, so as to overcome the Chinaman's prejudice against the publishers of a strange faith, the mission may be considered well equipped. The system of operation thus gradually formed has already done much, but is to be valued principally as a preparation for future progress. Year by year statistics are published which may indicate, but can only indicate, the greatness of the blessing which has rewarded faith and enterprise.

The returns presented at last Conference were as follows : 89 chapels, 6 missionaries, 82 native preachers, 402 scholars, 2,092 members and probationers. Boasting is excluded, yet when the spiritual significance of the above figures is grasped by the Christian reader, whether of our own or of other communions, he will feel that "it is a good thing to give thanks to the Lord."

Canadian Mission.—In 1872 the Rev. Dr. Cocker resumed his place in our ministry at home, and was succeeded by the Rev. John Medcraft as superintendent of the Canadian mission. Under his guidance the policy of giving special attention to the large towns was continued with gratifying results, but the work in general was retarded by discussion of the absorbing question of Methodist Union. In 1873 the basis of union was considered by our English Conference, and judgment on its proposals pronounced. The Conference of 1874, considering that the Canadian Conference had accepted the basis, consented that the union should be consummated, "in the hope that it will be overruled by the great Head of the Church to the establishment and the extension of Liberal Methodism in the Dominion of Canada, and to the advancement of the principles and blessings of the kingdom of Christ in the world." While parting from the mission with unfeigned regret, the Connexion had, and must ever have, the satisfaction of reflecting on the important work which God honoured it to achieve. At the time of the union with "The Methodist Church of Canada" the mission had 241 chapels, 86 ministers, and 8,312 members and probationers.

Australian Mission.—The feeble condition of our Church in this colony having awakened much concern, the Conference of 1882 determined to send out the Rev. Dr. Ward as a deputation to obtain information respecting their state and prospects. His report led to the selection and appointment of two ministers to succeed to the places of those returning in due course to England. The change of agents, attended with some changes in working, promised well for a time, but the final result, to which public Union negotiations contributed, was disappointing; and hence in 1887 the Conference, having regard to the general interest of the Christian cause more than to mere denominational credit, agreed with earnest goodwill to the proposals that the Church at Adelaide should unite with the Bible Christians, and the Church at Melbourne with the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion of Victoria.

Irish Mission.—During this period our mission in Ireland presents the same features as in former years. There is a growth to encourage the earnest worker, but a hard struggle is required to prevent decline; though our yearly statistics do not show much numerical progress, there is convincing evidence that the mission is a useful agency, deserving of liberal support.

Home Mission.—In 1876 it was resolved that as by the withdrawal of the Canadian mission the sums given for its sustentation were available for the support of other missions an amount not exceeding one-third of the entire income should be appropriated to enlarge and strengthen the denomination in England. Later it was arranged to conduct the business as a distinct branch under the management of a separate committee, and to make greater efforts to obtain more fruitful anniversaries and additional subscriptions.

The College.—For the first two years of its history the work of the College was pursued under the combined tutorship of the Rev. James Stacey, D.D., the resident Governor, and the Rev. Samuel Hulme, to whom was also assigned the office of General Secretary of Missions. When Mr. Hulme withdrew from the position, from regard to his health and in order to give himself entirely to the Mission Secretaryship, Dr. Stacey

was appointed to the office of Principal, including the work of tutor, which office he sustained for thirteen years. In 1876 the Rev Wm. Cocker, D.D., became his successor as Principal, while Dr. Stacey was appointed to teach Classics, Greek New Testament, Mental and Moral Philosophy, and Logic. On the retirement of Dr. Stacey from collegiate service the subjects of Mental and Moral Philosophy and Logic became part of the work of Dr. Cocker, the Principal, and the Rev. B. B. Turnock, M.A., discharged the duty of Classical Tutor till his early death. The Rev J. C. Watts, D.D., next gave instruction in Classics up to the time of his departure from Sheffield to a distant Circuit. Arrangements were then made for the attendance of the students at Firth College for Latin and Greek. In 1886 the Rev. Dr. Cocker relinquished the post which he had held for ten years, and was immediately succeeded by the present Principal, Rev. T. D. Crothers, D.D.

The office of College Secretary has been successively filled for various terms by the following: Revs. W. Mills, W. Cocker, D.D., A. M'Curdy, J. Ogden, T. D. Crothers, T. Addyman, J. Medicraft, G. Packer.

The course of study, which has varied but little, includes Apologetics, Theology, Old and New Testament Introduction, Church History, Ethics and Social Problems, Psychology, Classics, Logic, Homiletics, and Elocution. The Library, which is of great educational value to the students, has received additions at one time and another, by donation and by purchase, and now contains more than four thousand volumes. Of this aggregate the Rev. S. Hulme has presented upwards of one thousand well-selected books; Mr. G. A. K. Hobill, of London, a large collection of Methodist literature, comprising many rare and expensive volumes; and the late Mrs. M'Curdy and her sons a contribution entitled to distinct mention.

The ordinary term of residence in the College has been two years, in accordance with the original rules, which, however, permit a student of special proficiency to remain a third year, and that year to be reckoned as the first of probation. Among things favourable to the important designs of

the College is the widening conviction that the course should cover three years at least.

Revision of Rules.—The Conference of 1875 considered various proposals intended to enable Leaders' Meetings to return as members not only persons attending Class Meetings, but others whom they might deem deserving to be so recognised and returned. As the alteration failed to obtain the approval of the required majority of two-thirds, the conditions of membership remained unchanged. Two years later, however, the recommendations of a large Committee were adopted, according to which members meeting in class are not required to relate their religious experience every time they are present, and the exercises of the meeting may be varied by exposition of Scripture, free conversation on Christian work, and otherwise. In 1882 a variety of amendments received sanction which do not claim to be specified here. At the Conference of 1889 there was a further revision, when some changes of importance took place. The preface to the latest edition of the Rules invites attention to these alterations, and observes: "Our societies have received the designation of Churches, and in a few cases the term Church has been used in a collective sense as denoting the entire community. Another change has modified and enlarged the terms of membership. While the cultivation of brotherly spiritual fellowship in recognised modes is still required, a choice of such modes is now afforded by giving to the Fellowship Meeting and the Church Meeting an equal status with the long-established Class Meeting. On the fraternal Christian intercourse and mutual edification which each of these meetings is intended to promote the welfare of the Denomination must largely depend." At the septennial revision last year, the Conference held at Batley, among other modifications, resolved that: "The Christian Endeavour Societies for the purpose of representation in the Leaders' Meeting shall be considered as Class Meetings, and earnestly recommended that, as being thus associated with other means employed to cultivate social religious life amongst us, leaders should bestow upon them careful oversight that the spiritual objects for which they exist may continue supreme." The

same Conference also discussed the expediency of allowing a minister under special conditions to remain longer than five years in a Circuit, and decided for various reasons not to depart from the present rule.

Financial affairs.—As the Minutes of Conference give detailed accounts of our institutions, only a glimpse is here given of some of the greater movements which have occurred during this period. In 1876 it was proposed to augment the capital and income of the Beneficent Fund, in order that it might safely afford greater benefits to the annuitants. By the handsome donations of our people, and the increased subscriptions of ministers themselves, the capital of the Fund was augmented, during the three years over which the effort extended, by the sum of £6,500. The Conference of 1877 approved a scheme for the establishment of a new fund from which loans free of interest could be made, to encourage local efforts for the reduction or extinction of debts on Trust Estates. In 1879 a proportion of the ordinary income of the Chapel Fund was set aside for the purpose of this Loan Fund, and by the subsequent appropriation of one-third of the sum annually placed at the disposal of Conference in aid of Connexional Trust property, together with a sum voted from the Aid and Extension Fund in 1880, a large capital was created which has been gradually increased and is now in use. At last Conference it stood at £8,739 3s. 6d. The rules of the Mutual Guaranty Fund were revised in 1878, when more than two hundred and ninety Trust estates had been placed under its protection. Since that time the state of the Institution has gradually improved. In 1890 three hundred and seventy-two policies were in force for the protection of chapel and house property. The capital has increased to £5,661 5s. 8d. At the Longton Conference of 1880 the Aid and Extension Fund effort was commenced. The Missions and the Loan Fund principally, the College and the Paternal Funds to a small extent, were to be enriched by the results. The proposal met with a ready and generous response. The total sum realised for the several objects amounted to £11,000.

Chapels.—Most of our chapels are of considerable size, their average capacity being probably equal to that of the churches or chapels of other denominations. Such terms of description as “beautiful,” “commodious,” “well arranged,” are applicable to a large proportion of the whole number. The same may be said of our Sunday schools. Illustrations are given in this volume of one or more of the principal chapels of the Districts in England.

Men of Distinction.—The Rev. W Baggaly was distin-



REV. W. BAGGALY.

guished for great administrative ability. He was Treasurer and Manager of the Beneficent Fund for twenty-nine years, was Secretary of the Chapel and Guaranty Funds for ten years, and for some time Treasurer of the Auxiliary Fund. He was a guardian representative, and twice he occupied the President's chair. Soon after the Dewsbury Conference, 1876, his health seriously failed. The end came suddenly, September 28, 1879. He was in the fifty-second year of his ministry. His “Digest of the Minutes, Institutions,

Polity, Doctrines," &c., of the Connexion is a valuable compendium.

A few months afterwards the Rev. H. O. Crofts, D.D., born in 1813, passed peacefully to rest. His years in Canada were "years of hard work, and of great success." After his return to England he laboured successively in eight of our circuits. "He was remarkable as a man for his guilelessness, his geniality, the charitableness of his judgments, and his readiness to help the needy by self-sacrifice. As a minister of Christ he was distinguished for his knowledge of Divine truth, his careful expositions of God's Word, his pulpit earnestness, and the successes which he achieved." He presided over the important Liverpool Conference of 1861.

Some reference has been already made to important events in our Connexional history with which the name of William Cooke, D.D., will always be connected. He was born at Burslem in 1806. An illness in his fifteenth year was the occasion of his commencement of Christian life and work. Thus early his diligence in cultivating natural gifts of no mean order and availing himself of every opportunity to publish truth gave promise of a remarkable career. In 1827 he was sent to Ireland as a supply, and after intervening years in England, he was in 1836 again appointed, this time as Superintendent of the Irish Mission. Appointed to Liverpool in 1841 and made Mission Secretary, he rendered service which, with his past achievements, led the Conference of 1843 to elect him President after only sixteen years in the ministry. His triumphant vindication of evangelical truth in his celebrated discussion with Mr. Joseph Barker at Newcastle, in 1845, has already found a place in this history. His impaired health supplied a reason for his withdrawal from Circuit work, but as Editor and Book Steward for twenty-two years he edited the magazines with distinguished ability, and whilst thus engaged occupied the pulpits of our own and other denominations with sustained popularity and soul-saving effect. As an author he was voluminous, and his works, notably "The Deity," "Christian Theology," "The Shekinah," and

“Discourses,” were extensively read and highly valued. From 1875 to 1879 he became minister of Forest Hill, London. The services of his long career were not unrecognised. His election as President a second time in 1859 and a third time in 1869, and the presentation in 1873 of an address and a sum of £850, were amongst the tokens of general admiration and approval. During a severe illness and the gradual decline of mortal power which



REV. W. COOKE, D.D.

followed it, his closing months were favoured with clearer views of the love of God than even he had hitherto enjoyed. He died in the seventy-ninth year of his age and the fifty-seventh of his ministry.

The Rev. John Addyman was born in 1808. He was accepted for our ministry in 1833. He was selected as fittest of the junior ministers to be our first missionary in

Canada. His labours there were trying and perilous. Once he was arrested and lodged in prison as a spy. In 1845 he returned to this country in broken health, yet was spared to serve well some important circuits. At the Conference of 1858 he was chosen President. On June 7,



REV. J. ADDYMAN.

1887, he entered into that which is within the veil, to verify the saying which was frequently on his lips, "We shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."

The Rev. John Hudston was born in 1812, and received as a minister on trial in 1833. His pulpit ministrations

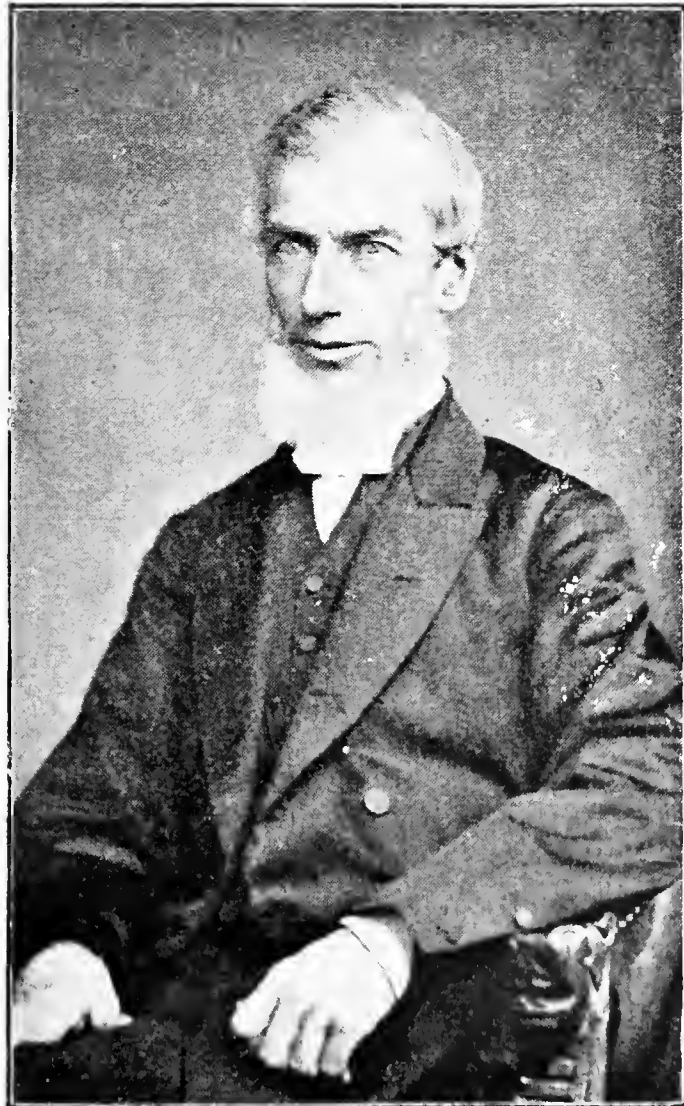
and administrative powers were highly appreciated. He was raised to the Presidency so early as the twentieth year of his ministry. In 1867 he was elected a guardian representative. His preaching was expository, but not coldly intellectual. He knew how to "speak a word in season to him who is weary" Because of his interest in young men of piety and promise, no one doubted the congruity of his appointment to the office of Theological Secretary, which he held for the long period of thirty-two years ;



REV. J. HUDSTON.

discharging the duties with enlightened fidelity and fatherly kindness. He was Editor and Book Steward from 1874 to 1880. For a number of years he edited also *The Methodist Quarterly*. The address which he delivered at the opening of the College Session in 1887, and which was published in the *Magazine*, shows how intimate was his knowledge of the Connexion's history, and with what calm earnestness he laboured for its prosperity. He died July 9, 1888.

Few ministers have reached so lofty an eminence in our community as the Rev James Stacey, D.D., who was born in Sheffield, February, 1818, of upright, industrious, and religiously disposed parents. His circumstances in early life were of an humble character, his trade that of a working cutler. He entered into Church fellowship before he was twelve. He began to preach at sixteen years of



REV. J. STACEY, D.D.

age, and at nineteen became a student under the Rev T Allin, with whose able tuition he was favoured for about eighteen months. He commenced his ministry in 1839, and continued in circuit work until 1856, when his health failed. In his mental character there was a rare combination of analytical and synthetical power. With minuteness

of search which nothing could elude, was united a breadth of survey which nothing could surpass. Whilst metaphysical studies were his delight, he found great joy in expounding moral and religious truth, and in commending it to general acceptance with all the power and grace of style which his brilliant imagination and cultured taste enabled him to employ. But it was not in preaching and writing only that his superiority was seen. His conversation was unrivalled, not "faultily faultless," but always precise, refined, and frequently sparkling. For meditative hearers especially his preaching was strongly attractive. His sermons were upon the central truths of religion, and belonged to the experimental order, to which doctrines are introductory and of which duties are the intended result. His labours as an author have been much appreciated by scholarly and theological readers. "The Christian Sacraments" is well known, and, not to mention others, "Consecrated Enthusiasm," a memoir of his friend the Rev. W. N. Hall. He served the greatest of causes for lengthy periods as General Secretary of the Missions. But it is probable that his name will long be held in honoured remembrance principally because of his connection with the College, his qualifications being reflected in the diversified excellences of many who profited by his tuition. He was twice honoured to preside over the Conference, at Hanley in 1860 and at Halifax in 1881. The degree of D.D. was bestowed upon him by the Wesleyan University of Ohio. On his retirement our own Connexion showed its long continued appreciation by a testimonial amounting to £1,000. His closing years were spent at Ranmoor, and he finished his course May 11, 1891.

The name of the Rev. Alexander M'Curdy appears in the obituary of 1892. The record in the Minutes, much abridged, is here given. He was by birth a Scotchman. His Christian life commenced upon our Irish Mission through the ministry of the late Dr. W. Cooke, and to Bolton, Lancashire, belongs the honour of introducing him to our ministry. The Jubilee Conference appointed him to Truro. He continuously laboured most diligently and acceptably in Circuit work

until 1879, when he retired to Loughborough, where his time, strength, and ample means were unstintedly devoted to the service of the entire Denomination. Mr. M'Curdy was thoroughly conversant with our Methodist doctrines and most warmly attached to our distinctive polity. His natural bias and early habits were strongly in the direction of literary and theological studies. His preaching power was one of his



REV. A. M'CURDY.

chief features. To a well-balanced mind, disciplined by close thought and cultivated by extensive reading, were added moral and spiritual forces and an energetic and sympathetic delivery which made his ministry instructive and edifying. For official work he *acquired* high qualifications, and in it achieved signal success. He was not inaptly described as our Connexional statesman. Singularly successful in soliciting

subscriptions, he was equally generous in his gifts. All this won for him reward as well as renown. He was appointed one of the original Trustees of the College, and soon afterwards Secretary ; a Trustee of the Book Room and of the Beneficent Society, Treasurer of the Paternal Fund, Manager of the Beneficent Fund, Secretary of the Chapel and Loan Funds, Chairman several times of the Stationing Committee, a guardian representative, and in 1871 and 1885 President of Conference. In recognition of his manifold Connexional services he was presented at the Dewsbury Conference in 1890 with portraits in oils of himself and Mrs. M'Curdy, and with the works of John Ruskin and other valuable volumes. He was a man of deep feeling, tender emotion, and great kindness of heart. Beyond all, he was a godly man. His joy was that in serving the Church he was serving Christ. Intimate friends only knew how pleasant and playful he could be ; yet there was ever deep-seated reverence and underlying seriousness that proved how clearly he kept eternity in view. For some years he was a sufferer. At the close of the Leeds Conference he slowly left the platform, remarking in tremulous tones, "This is the last Conference I shall attend." A few suffering months were added, in which he calmly renewed his consecration to Christ, and testified delightfully to the felt power and preciousness of the Saviour's sanctifying grace—then came the messenger, and the good and faithful servant entered into the joy of his Lord on November 25, 1891, in the forty-seventh year of his ministry and the seventy-first year of his age.

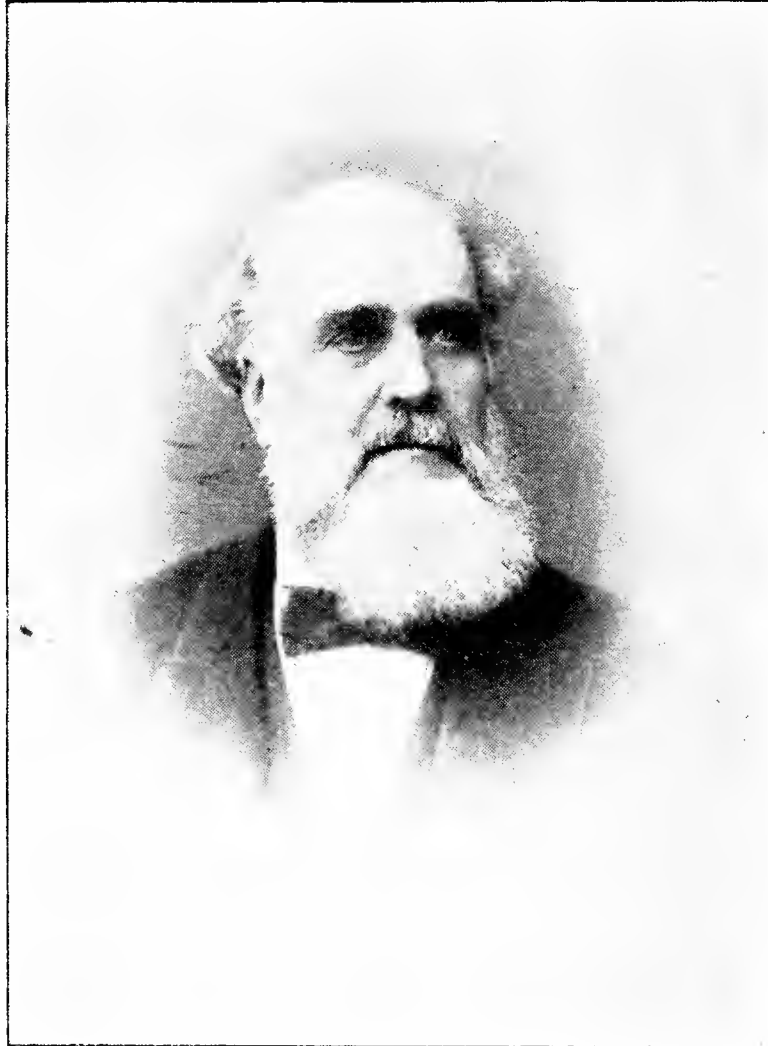
In addition to the ministers sketched in this chapter (or previously), many others have died during the past twenty-five years, having filled important Connexional office and won Connexional honour. A larger number who in ordinary Circuit service fed "the flock of God not by constraint but willingly" have gone to repose beneath the smile of the Chief Shepherd. That their memories may be honoured and reference to the obituaries which commemorate them facilitated, the name of each, and the year in which his death is recorded, are here subjoined :—

A. Lynn, jun., 1873	W Woodward, 1885
W Reynolds „	H. H. Guttridge „
J. Curtis, 1874	G. Bradshaw, 1886
J. Hillock „	J. Simon „
J. Argue, 1875	G. Hallatt, 1888
R. Walker „	S. Nicholson „
S. Jones „	J. Graham „
C. J. Donald, 1876	H. Piggin „
R. Henshaw „	T. Addyman „
W Pacey „	S. E. McQuire „
H. Marsden „	A. R. Pearson, 1891
A. Hallam „	J. W Williams „
D. Sheldon, 1877	J. Flather „
T. Mills, 1878	S. Walker, 1892
J. Coultas, 1879	A. Schofield „
P T. Gilton, 1880	J. Ramsden, 1893
J. Taylor „	W B. Wilshaw, 1893
C. Mann „	J. Candelet „
L. Saxton, 1881	T. W Ridley „
T. Guttridge „	T. Boycott, 1894
J. Wynne, 1882	T. James „
J. Orme „	G. H. Elvidge, 1895
T. Rudge, 1884	G. Grundy, 1896
L. Stoney, 1885	C. Linley „
J. F Goodall „	J. B. Armstrong, 1896
R. C. Turner „	

Our lay guardian-representatives, and in exceptional cases other men of worth and influence in the Churches, are, when their course is ended, recognised in the yearly Minutes. Clearly a list of all such cannot be supplied here. Among those who are chronicled in the Minutes as worthy of grateful remembrance by the Churches are men of wealth and generosity, such as Messrs. Joseph Love of Durham, Mark Firth of Sheffield, William Sykes of Lindley; men deserving of esteem for the official services which they rendered, such as Messrs. B. Fowler of Southport, Edwin Lumby of Halifax, J. G. Heaps of Leeds, Joseph Tipping of Ashton, J. Whitworth of London; men of literary talent, such as Messrs. William Scott of Barlaston, and Alfred Ramsden of Halifax, who, as editor and proprietor of the *Halifax Courier*, in civic affairs, and in works of philanthropy of almost every kind, secured a high and abiding place both in public esteem and in the hearts of his Christian friends.

The progress which in everything attended the Connexion

during the previous twenty-five years has been continued from 1872 to the present year, 1897. In 1872 the statistics for England only, including the Home Mission stations, were: Chapels, 412; Circuit preachers, 143; local preachers, 1,140; members, 22,037; probationers, 1,827. The returns about to be presented to the Conference of 1897 are: Chapels, 444; Circuit preachers, 188; local preachers, 1,133; members,



ALD. A. RAMSDEN, J.P., HALIFAX.

30,291; probationers, 4,325—the increase during the period being therefore 8,254 members and 2,498 probationers.

The totals for the whole Connexion, including Ireland and China, are as follows: Chapels, 543; Circuit preachers, 294; local preachers, 1,224; members, 32,954; probationers, 5,097; and Sunday scholars, 84,372.

It is a solemnising thought that only few of the ministers

who were numbered with us when the Jubilee Volume appeared "remain to this present"; "the remainder are fallen asleep." One only of the authors of that volume is still with us, the venerable Rev. S. Hulme, who in 1828 com-



REV. S. HULME.

menced a ministry of extraordinary power, wherein the Cross was always pre-eminent. He exposed the sophistry of Barker with masterly force, and routed all objections to our

mission to China ; for sixteen years he aided our missions as Secretary ; the Jubilee Volume owed much to him ; while over all that he did the benignity of his influence breathed a fragrance which is still grateful. He was three times President.

The other ministers who saw the Jubilee, and hope to see the Centenary, are, in order of standing : Revs. S. Smith, W Cocker, D.D., T Smith, W Willan, J. Wilson, B. Turnock, M. Mills, and D. Round.

The retrospect of our Connexional history may well awaken devout gratitude to the Head of the Church. At His call, our fathers went out from an established denomination, forsaking associations that were sacred and severing themselves from the communion of ministers whom they had revered and friends to whom they had become endeared, and they went out, not knowing whither they went. Their obedience brought them, and has brought us, their children, into a land of promise. By manifest providences in critical periods of our history, and by continuous evidences of His favour, God has shown that He is not ashamed to be called our God. The doctrines and ordinances which we hold in common with others of the people of God are still, as they have ever been, held and honoured amongst us. Ministers have been raised by Himself that they might stand before Him and speak His Word to their fellow-creatures ; and His gifts and His graces have been bestowed with bounteous hand. The Churches of our denomination and its Conferences and administrative committees have been endowed with a succession of able Christian laymen. It has been made evident to all the world during a period of no less than one hundred years that those who founded our community were not in error when they expressed their belief that the freedom of those whom the Son has made free indeed includes that freedom in harmony with which Christian ministers and Christian laymen may rightfully agree in together governing the Church. The Methodist New Connexion has not, it is true, increased in size as it has increased in influence. The friendly separation from it of thousands of its members in Canada and Australia, the facts that many are lost from its Churches every year by

reason of removals to places where we have no cause, and that its enlightened principles were, when it began in advance of the times, and are even yet not fully realised or perfectly understood by all—these and other considerations should be kept in mind. The Creator has made a marvellous provision for the extension of the beauty and the wealth of His kingdom of nature. The seed which would otherwise perish upon its parent plant or fall unprofitably upon some hard and sterile surface, there to lie inert, is wafted by the gentle breeze upon wings of softest down, or driven by the stormy gust to the four quarters of heaven. Not in vain has it been made to quit its position. In its distant lodging-place it will abide for a time, but only for a time. Thereafter new life will exhibit itself in unexpected beauty and wealth of blessing. So it has been, and so it will be, with those principles which our history has exemplified. Under the prospering blessing of Him to whom be all the glory for what is past, these principles will, we pray and hope and believe, continue to exercise wide and far-reaching influence during the years which are to come.

J D Brothers

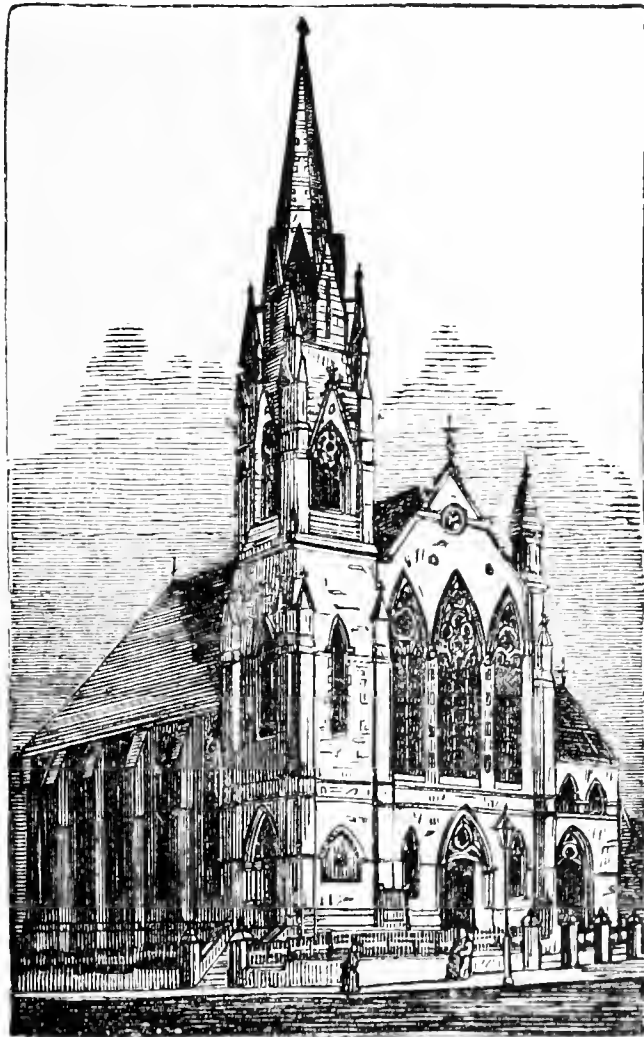
THE RELATION
OF THE
METHODIST NEW CONNEXION
TO
OTHER METHODIST CHURCHES

REV W LONGBOTTOM.

THE causes which operated to bring the Methodist New Connexion denomination into existence, and the ecclesiastical principles on which it was founded, have been set forth in previous chapters of this volume. Its origin was purely ecclesiastical. There was not the slightest dissent from the doctrines of Methodism as taught by John Wesley, nor from its evangelical spirit, nor from any of its special methods of working to reach spiritual ends; on all these points an unbroken oneness existed. The conflict had exclusive relation to the final absolute power possessed by the preachers, and the refusal to grant to the societies a share in the government of Methodism. Even in Mr. Wesley's time this feature of subjection required from laymen had begun to excite dissatisfaction, and to create apprehension as to their position in the future. But for many years points of ecclesiastical interest received scant attention, and the feeling named grew slowly. Methodism in its first stage was a purely evangelistic movement under strong personal control; it was worked apart from any recognised Church authority or sanction; and but slight consideration was given to its ecclesiastical position or rights. Then the high personal character of Mr. Wesley, his spiritual power, his wide knowledge, his

faculty of organisation, his amazing industry, commanded from his followers great reverence and submission, and there was little desire to contest his personal rule. Yet it came more and more to be discerned that his methods of action were based on absolute personal authority and power. Whom he would he received into his societies, and whom he would he excluded; he appointed helpers or dismissed them; when it seemed well to him he changed their spheres of labour; he invited persons to his Conferences or passed them over; personal prerogative prevailed, unfettered by any legal or constitutional check. In making this simple statement of fact there is no intention to call in question Mr. Wesley's high integrity of purpose. It may be admitted that his mastership was exercised with a moderation and impartiality which win admiration, and with as little imperfection as could be expected in any individual. But personal rule has limitations of knowledge and opportunity. Remarkable as Mr. Wesley was for zeal, for physical endurance, for power of travel, and for methodical habits, there was much he could not see or know. He had to depend upon others' knowledge, and in many decisions to trust to their guidance. In this there was a practical delegation of power. It might carry with it responsibility to Mr. Wesley, but what protection did it afford to those who were practically out of his reach? The governed have rights in respect to the government they are required to obey. In the civil sphere we submit to laws, but we claim the right to elect and to give instruction to our law-makers. In matters ecclesiastical there should be some right of choice in respect to those appointed to rule. And seeing that Methodism in Mr. Wesley's time, practically considered, was shaping itself more and more into a separate ecclesiastical organisation, could there not have been committed to it, in some initial degree, hereafter admitting further growth, a power to determine what its government should be? Was it well to maintain absoluteness of personal rule to the close of a long life, and by careful legal provisions to arrange that absolute supremacy should for all time to come be placed in the hands of one hundred preachers? There was a manifest consolidation of Methodism taking place for more than a quarter of a century prior to Mr. Wesley's death. Its buildings were constantly increasing, duly vested in trust,

and it cannot be a surprise that many persons craved for an assurance that conditions in respect to both preachers and people should be put on an equitable basis for the future. Yet there was a general willingness to postpone action or conflict during Mr. Wesley's lifetime. The natural limit to personal rule was apparent, and it was judged to be wise quietly to wait developments. But when, on Mr. Wesley's



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decease, it was found that the power, which was previously his personal possession, had been placed exclusively in the hands of one hundred preachers—that first chosen by himself they could afterwards choose their successors—that large legal rights were committed to them over Connexional property—that the final and supreme rule in the future was to be with a Conference of which laymen were to form no part—then the previous dissatisfaction was widened and intensified.

This dissatisfaction was expressed in many ways, and had its final issue in several applications to Conference from trustees and societies, craving for emancipation from the relation of subordination to the Church of England which Mr. Wesley had imposed, and which the Conference continued to sustain ; and for concession to the laity of the right, representatively, to share in the administration and legislation of the denomination in every court up to Conference itself.

The final determination of the Conference not to grant the changes desired, and the evident hopelessness of further attempts to secure them, led to the formation of the Methodist New Connexion. It has been the conviction of its members that the essential principles embodied in the proposed changes were in themselves reasonable and Scriptural, and such as cannot be permanently denied to any rightly constituted Church. These principles should be considered by themselves, detached as much as possible from memories of intemperate advocacy on the one side, or of hard resistance on the other. Keen controversies tend to develop human imperfections, and we do not affirm that the first Methodist ecclesiastical controversy was free from them. The attempt to justify all that was said or done would obscure great issues which should be calmly kept in view. Had a spirit of conciliation prevailed, and a willingness been shown to grant changes by degrees, there are reasons to think irritation would have been allayed, and the controversy kept within moderate bounds. But when claims meet with unyielding resistance they come to be urged with a stronger insistence. The temptation arises to extort by agitation the things which are denied to respectful application ; so extreme words are uttered and sore relations created. When, however, one hundred years have passed, a dispassionate retrospect can be taken. Such discussion as principles still require can be lifted out of the atmosphere of personal bias, and can be sustained in a tranquil and gracious spirit.

The origin of the Methodist New Connexion having been so largely ecclesiastical in its character, it will not be inappropriate to consider how far the changes it sought to incorporate in its constitution have been justified in the light of subsequent history, and how they stand at present related to the Wesleyan or parent body in particular, and to other

branches of Methodism generally. It is well there should be clear discernment of the extent to which the principles of reform first contended for now prevail, and the extent to which they are still left unrealised. Such an inquiry will naturally lead to an extended reference to the features and conditions of the various sections of our common Methodism. This should lead to a better knowledge of our existing distinctions and peculiarities, and the better knowledge will be a foundation on which a growing agreement can be built. The decision which led to the first secession in Methodism, and the formation of a new denomination, was one fraught with the greatest responsibility. In many ways it involved a wrestle with difficulties, and a payment on behalf of principles, of which the unreflecting portion of society have little conception. Were these principles in themselves needful and just? Let us look at points of agreement with ourselves in other sections of Methodism, and also at points of difference, and seek so to consider them that the oneness of Methodism may be increased and not lessened.

The following were the concessions which those who originated the Methodist New Connexion requested the Wesleyan Conference to grant:—

1. The right to worship in convenient hours free from limitations as to times fixed for service in the Established Church.

2. The right to regard their own preachers as fully qualified ministers and to receive the ordinances from their hands.

3. The right to have a voice in the reception and expulsion of members, in the choice of Church officers, and to be represented in the District Meetings and Annual Conference, and so to share in the administration, discipline, and legislation of the body

After the secession had taken place the first and second of the above requirements were rapidly yielded. It soon came to be a matter of common agreement in relation to the Established Church to drop the restrictions which had previously imposed disability, and, in the arrangement of religious services, to act independently. By a similar process it was found to be desirable to meet the requests of the societies for

the administration of the ordinances by their own preachers. Doubtless it soon came to be seen that this concession was needed in the interests of the preachers. Had it been withheld it would have continued their ministerial inferiority, and would have been a sign of their unfitness to fulfil the whole round of pastoral functions and duties. Such a deprivation would have ill accorded with the exclusiveness of ministerial control in other respects granted by Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration. This instrument was fitted to promote the doctrine of pastoral prerogative which soon became a distinguishing feature in Wesleyan Methodism. It is not, therefore, to be wondered that the mark of disability involved in withholding from preachers liberty to administer ordinances was soon set aside by those who had been its strenuous advocates. Reverential regard to Mr. Wesley's desire that Methodism might continue in subordination to the Established Church, carrying with it limitation to the full exercise of ministerial power, ceased in this particular to be urged. A practical separation from this Church came to be speedily effected, authority was given to the preachers to administer the Sacraments, and the societies were permitted, save in the element of self-government, to possess all the rights and privileges of Churches.

There is no evidence to lead to the opinion that these changes or concessions were adopted as an advance toward those who had been constrained to early separation, or to facilitate their return. This motive does not seem to have had an existence at any time. The changes took place because the old relation of association with the Established Church, which Mr. Wesley intended to be continued, was felt to be in every respect anomalous. The Established Church never encouraged it, never gave a sanction to it, never attempted to make it a practicable and permanent relation. While, therefore, a section of Methodists, particularly some trustees, sought to follow on the lines Mr. Wesley had laid down, the general sentiment in favour of this course declined, and Methodism practically asserted its full independence. And, while it may be true that the changes effected were not designed as an approach to the first seceders, it must also be

admitted that they are an evidence of the reasonableness of the requests the seceders presented, and are the historical vindication of the rightness of the claims they advanced.

As two of the three essential claims presented by the seceders to the Wesleyan Conference had been quietly conceded, yet with no purpose to bring them back, neither did they evoke any willingness on their part to return. Friction and bitterness had left their heritage of difficulty. Alienation, probably on both sides, continued its sway. Then, while two conditions of distance had been removed, other conditions remained and increased, which rather widened the area. In the Methodist New Connexion an important principle had been established that "the Church itself is entitled, either collectively in the persons of its members, or representatively by persons chosen out of and by itself, to a voice and influence in all the acts of legislation and government." Not a trace of this principle existed in the Parent Body. Then, further, it had shown a growth of the doctrine of the pastorate, claiming for ministers powers and prerogative fundamentally different from those granted in the Methodist New Connexion, or in any Free Protestant Churches. So that while some causes of separation had been removed, in root principles of difference other causes had been increased and accentuated.

Since the first Methodist secession there have been periods of disquiet and disaffection in Wesleyan Methodism, followed by other secessions of lesser or greater measure ; the last one in its various results being marked by wide range of influence. It worked slowly for a time, but at last became a point of departure toward modifications in the Wesleyan constitution and economy of much moment ; while present conditions give not a few indications that the final resting-place has not yet been reached. The point of departure to which we refer was the adoption of a principle of lay-representation, and the creation of a Representative Conference, or session of Conference, as distinct from the Pastoral Conference. This departure yielded so much in name and appearance, that those who are outside the inner workings of Methodist economy have the impression that all essential distinctions in Metho-

dism have been obliterated, and that it is stubbornness as to trifles and ungraciousness of spirit which prevent the sections of Methodism being one. It is well for all sections of our common Methodism that there should be a calm setting forth of the distinctions, whether they be small or great, which cause one section to differ from another, that we may see how near we are to each other or how distant, and how much is still needful to create substantial agreement. After an existence of one hundred years it is not unseemly that the ecclesiastical constitution adopted by the founders of the Methodist New Connexion should be viewed in the light of changes which have taken place, that we may see how far Methodism generally has come to stand on the same basis, and to adopt the same general principles of polity, and to what extent elements of difference still continue.

One of the concessions originally applied for to the Wesleyan Conference was Lay Representation, and at last this was granted in 1877. It must be admitted that in reality, but still more in appearance, this is a great change. For a long period all surrender in this direction was strongly refused. For many reasons, it was pleaded, it could not be allowed. On constitutional grounds it was not practicable; in itself it was not desirable; and by many it was strenuously urged that such representation would be an encroachment upon the pastoral office and responsibility. But the forces in favour of the change gradually increased and finally prevailed. Conditions indeed had been slowly created which made a step forward or backward inevitable. It had been realised how needful was the help of laymen, how much great Connexional institutions and undertakings depended upon their aid, and that in consideration of the help rendered some place must be found for their counsel. For a time this was secured by committees largely appointed by the Conference, but to which District Meetings might send an additional number of members; in special cases by meetings convened by the President, to which a select number of laymen were invited. These meetings grew in interest, and showed how much ability was available for the service of the Connexion. The functions of the meetings, however, were limited to consulta-

tion and counsel ; and the laymen appointed to attend them in no genuine sense could speak representatively. Selected largely by the Conference composed of ministers only, and those added by the District Meetings, consisting only of one class of officers who must be nominated by ministers, how could they act as receiving authority from the Churches? Talent was secured, position, social influence, financial aid ; but the Churches were not represented. The arrangement was partial and anomalous, and could have only a limited duration. The son of Dr. Bunting took the bold step of advising that the arrangement should cease, and of advocating the admission of laymen into the Conference itself. After some years of discussion, and by the commanding influence of leaders who saw that conditions could not be continued as they had been, opposition was gently overborne, and lay representation in Conference obtained.

This change carried with it an aspect of large liberality ; and, so far as the recognition of the principle is concerned of associating laymen with ministers in all Church courts, seemed to bring the Wesleyan denomination in line with other Churches, and, in the apparent surrender of exclusive ministerial control, to remove the one barrier which had so conspicuously divided it from other sections of Methodism. But the change, though covered and ornamented by so liberal a name, only requires to be examined that its manifold and sharp limitations may be seen. It is formulated in a scheme which has the clearest purpose in view, and bears evidence of elaborate construction to guard against possible conditions by which the purpose may be frustrated. The purpose is to maintain the pastoral supremacy in all that is highest and greatest in Church life, and to confine the sphere of laymen to all that is secondary. The Wesleyan Conference may be understood in more senses than one, and it is needful to see what the term may cover.

The first and only Conference in Wesleyanism which has real and legal power is composed of one hundred ministers. It continues, according to Mr. Wesley's appointment, as the only body which can give binding power to arrangements and clothe them with legal authority. Then there is what

may be termed an outer Conference, or Conferences, in which all that is done is provisional, and in respect to the constitution of which there is the freest scope for modification. Hence, so far as this outside Conference is concerned, there have been great changes, and much larger changes are possible. We are not aware that a single decision reached by the outer Conference has been contested by the Legal Conference. Invested with supreme power, the Legal Conference consents to allow this power to be nominal, and ratifies, without discussion or remonstrance, the decisions of the



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larger Conference. The responsibility of contesting these decisions would be so great, and the consternation created by an independent assertion of its power so appalling, it uniformly approves of all which is done by the outer Assembly, to which the name of Conference has come to be given. So much is said that it may appear how much practical freedom is possessed in constituting this outer Conference, and how it can be shaped according to almost any ecclesiastical pattern desired. If laymen have been admitted to this Conference they can also be admitted to share equally with ministers in the whole of its business. The Legal

Conference can, and doubtless would, ratify all that is done in the one case as in the other.

The feature of this outer Conference, prior to the year 1877, was that it was composed of ministers only, having permission to deal with all subjects coming within the sphere of Wesleyan influence. All its members had equal power, and shared in all decisions. But this Conference has passed away. In its place a Conference of two sections has been created—one large section, composed in some cases of a thousand ministers or more, having exclusive control of assigned subjects; the other section, composed of 240 ministers and 240 laymen, and confined to narrow restrictions in the subjects with which it is permitted to deal. One section of this Conference is designated Pastoral, the other Representative. As the two sections are differently constituted and have differing functions assigned to them, it is simpler to call one the Pastoral Conference and the other the Representative Conference.

It were better, if space permitted, that the full official account should be given of the division line laid down as to the subjects which come under the exclusive control of the Pastoral Conference. It will be found in past Minutes of the Conference, though we fear not in recent Minutes. The following is an outline. The Pastoral Conference elects the President and all officers of the Conference; it determines all cases of admission to the ministry or exclusion from it; it deals with all which relates to ministerial character and teaching, and with all final appeals in discipline, whether relating to ministers or members; it appoints ministers to Circuits and institutions; it receives pastoral reports, and supervises Connexional literature; it prepares and adopts Replies to Addresses; it decides upon all official appointments, deputations, and delegations; it regulates conduct of public worship. It will be seen from this brief outline how all that is pre-eminently vital in Church life is under the sole control of ministers. All decisions in respect to teaching, character, fitness to continue in Church membership, appointments to offices of great importance and to Circuits, are reserved for ministers only. According to a recent definition

of the professed organ of liberalism in Wesleyanism, all which relates to "Doctrine, Discipline, and Stations," must be dealt with only by the Pastoral Conference. The claim is one of vast import, and requires to be studied in its possible applications. It excludes the voice and influence of the Church in the things which most profoundly affect its well-being and responsibility. The Representative Conference is left to deal with departments and funds; with missions, schools, chapel affairs, and schemes of extension; with ministerial sustentation in its various Methodistic forms; with education and temperance; with observance of the Lord's Day; with reports and resolutions of Committee of Privileges; and with all things which affect the financial or general affairs of the Connexion. It will be seen from this brief outline how clear is the line of cleavage between the functions of the two Conferences, and how carefully constructed is the scheme which divides ministers from laymen in respect to the classes of subjects with which they are permitted to deal.

Here, then, is an important difference and contrast between the Wesleyan Conference as developed in its double form and the Conference of the Methodist New Connexion. In the latter Conference laymen sit from its beginning to its close. There is no separation of subjects or votes. Ministers and laymen speak and act jointly in all discussions and decisions. They are alike the guardians of doctrine and discipline, and both share in the power and responsibility of ministerial appointments. The denomination is governed by the principle universally adopted in Presbyterian, Congregational, and Baptist denominations and all Free Churches—that Churches *as such*, as well as ministers, are concerned in all which relates to soundness in teaching and the preservation of the purity of Church life.

Not only must account be taken of the limitations of subjects with which lay representatives are permitted to deal, but consideration must also be given to the electoral body which appoints the representatives. To whom is committed the ecclesiastical franchise? The electors may be a small body, and their conditions of qualification such that in no

direct way do they reflect the thought or desire of those who, broadly speaking, are considered to be represented. In the Methodist New Connexion the representative to the Conference is chosen by the Quarterly Meeting, and the Quarterly Meeting is composed of representatives from the Churches in the Circuit. In a large denomination it would be impracticable to compose a Conference in this way. It is not essential to any just principle of representation that representatives should be chosen by Circuits; they could be chosen by Districts. The essential point is that in a way broadly equitable the representation should reflect the judgment and choice of the people generally. Now the singularity of the Wesleyan constitution is such that the members of the Church as such are not represented at all. The Wesleyan Quarterly Meeting is composed of official persons only, and each official must receive his appointment through ministerial nomination. The Wesleyan Leaders' Meeting is composed of official persons only, and each official can be appointed only by ministerial nomination. In Wesleyan Methodism a Church meeting for ecclesiastical purposes does not exist; a private member has no voice. There is no provision by which he can directly or representatively influence a single vote or decision. An individual must be a leader, steward, local preacher, trustee, or hold some office, before he can be a member of a Quarterly Meeting or share in the appointment of any one by whom he can be represented. The proportion of private members in a Church to its official members can be generally estimated. Two features in this denomination thus come to view: the very large number of members to whom no kind or degree of ecclesiastical franchise is granted; the power entrusted to ministers, by the initiatory power of nomination, to mould its voting or governing constituency.

In the Methodist New Connexion, Church Meetings exist for ecclesiastical as well as spiritual purposes. Leaders' Meetings are composed of ministers, leaders, assistant leaders, stewards, representatives of trustees and Sunday school, and a proportion of representatives directly elected by members. No one has exclusive power of nomination. Quarterly Meetings are composed of ministers, a proportion of elected

officials, but mainly of persons chosen and sent as representatives. The point of distinction in these meetings is the sway of the representative principle.

The constitution of the Wesleyan District Meeting require notice and the duties assigned to it. It is composed of ministers, who, during a considerable portion of the proceedings, act by themselves. In the transaction, however, of financial and general business, Circuit Stewards are admitted and lay members in the place of Circuit Stewards who are unable to attend. The division of the business of District Meetings, or, according to the new designation of Synod given to them, is on the same lines as those laid down for the division of Conference business. Until recently the only persons eligible to attend District Meetings were Circuit Stewards, or in the case of a Steward declaring himself unable to attend a Quarterly Meeting might elect a substitute in his place. Apart from exceptional cases, only Circuit Stewards could be members of District Meetings. Circuit Stewards are persons who come specially under ministerial selection, are likely to be in touch and harmony with ministers, and generally are chosen from those of higher temporal and social standing. In addition to the official right to attend District Meetings, they have committed to them the initial power to name ministers for Circuit invitation. Now, though these meetings have a most important place in Methodist economy, and are the only meetings which can apply an formative influence upon the character of Conference, yet Circuits have had practically no freedom of election to them—a class-leader has not been eligible for election, nor a local preacher, nor a church steward, nor a school superintendent—the right has been restricted to Circuit Stewards, persons whose election has depended upon the nomination of ministers. The electoral body was restricted to about fifteen hundred, and no more striking testimonies could be given of the unreality of the representation than have been offered by Wesleyan ministers.

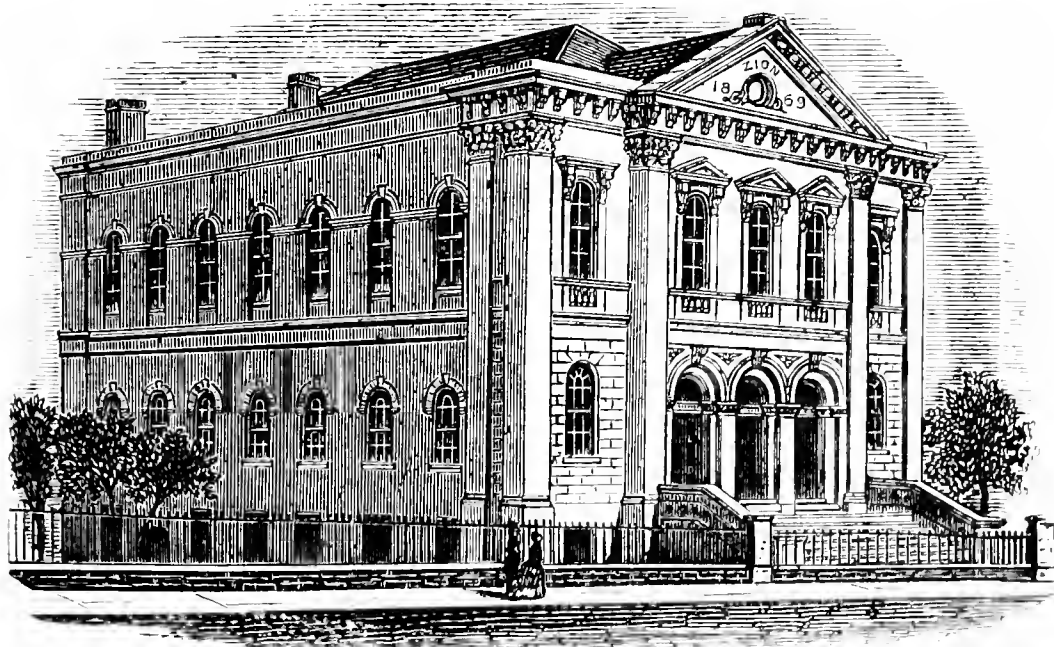
A modification, not found in Wesleyan handbooks, has recently taken place in respect to the constitution of the District Meeting, and one or two members can be sent to it

from each Quarterly Meeting, in addition to Circuit Stewards, according to the number of ministers a Circuit employs. The members so sent are to be those who are "considered suitable on general grounds to take part in the counsels of the District Synods." We take this to mean that men can be chosen irrespective of any office they occupy, and the nomination is to be not ministerial but by laymen in the Quarterly Meeting, and the election is to be by ballot. This regulation was adopted so recently as 1892, and seems noiselessly to have taken its place in the Conference Standing Orders. If any reported discussion occurred in connection with its adoption, it escaped our observation. It has been a quiet innovation, yet in the principles it involves a most momentous one. It formally puts a restriction on the range of ministerial nominations. It carries an aspect of limitation of ministerial prerogative. It gives to Quarterly Meetings an unfettered choice. It seems to open the door of ecclesiastical elevation to a private member. It makes Quarterly Meetings a basis on which to build a power which representatively can move the Conference itself. It may be the proportion of members of District Meetings freely elected is at present small, but the principle of free election is recognised as it has not been before. It must be regarded as a great advance—probably an undesigned one—toward putting the method of constituting the District Meeting on the line of the Methodist New Connexion District Meeting. Apart from this significant departure, the scheme of lay representation established in 1877, with its variety of balances and checks, the narrow range of subjects it permits laymen to touch, is as limited a scheme as can be devised, and can but faintly reflect the mind of the Denomination as a whole. It is an arrangement which excludes private members (perhaps nine-tenths of the membership) from any voice or vote, and is elaborately constructed to effect this purpose. The Church in its unofficial part continues unrepresented in Conference; yet the power newly and almost silently given which permits Quarterly Meetings to elect some proportion of members of District Meetings by an unfettered vote is a great change, and in the popular direction a great gain.

Speaking generally, in outward forms and methods there are many points of correspondence between Wesleyan Methodism and the Methodist New Connexion. The first secession is marked by less extreme of reaction than subsequent secessions. The two ecclesiastical structures have a close resemblance. The parentage of the former body in relation to the latter has a most visible stamp. The several changes which the Wesleyan body from time to time has been constrained to adopt has brought it more and more into line with the Methodist New Connexion. The differences have always been more on the ground of principles than of forms, and this ground is now narrower than before. Principles, however, remain which create real and wide divergences between the two ecclesiastical systems, some perhaps may be constrained to say opposition. We have no desire to magnify them, and it is not well to underrate them; the wiser course is dispassionately to look at them, that the nature of modifications essential to oneness may be clearly understood, even if they cannot be speedily secured. Those who advocate union between denominations, without a clear apprehension of the essential elements which keep them apart, hinder rather than help the object in view. It will be evident from the remarks we have already made there are two root principles which make the two denominations still to differ, and we will attempt with a fuller distinctness to state them.

One of these root principles is the right of the Church directly or representatively to share in all which concerns its discipline and government. In the Methodist New Connexion this right has been admitted from the first and maintained until now. It was one of the prominent claims originally advanced, and in the modifications of a century the provision for its exercise has been strengthened and not weakened. Hence power is not restricted to officials; the Church itself, understanding by this term members as well as officials, can make its voice heard, and its power felt, in the control of all Church questions and interests. In this respect it comes as near to the Congregational idea as a constitution essentially Presbyterian in its features permits. We have seen for how

long a period this representative principle had been excluded from the Wesleyan constitution ; that in Leaders' Meetings and Quarterly Meetings it had no place ; that in District Meetings it had no true recognition ; that from the Conference itself it was rigidly shut out. We have seen also how within recent date the principle has obtained sanction and operation. Lay representation in Conference has been granted. But it has been explained with how many reserves and limitations, so much so that the representation allowed is altogether secondary and subordinate. Then the basis of the representation is in the District Meeting, and until



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recently this meeting has been constituted almost entirely of ministers and one class of officials, subject to the nomination of ministers. In the new right, however, granted to each Quarterly Meeting freely to elect, exclusive of ministerial nomination, one or more members of the District Meeting, a change has been adopted which in the principle it involves, viewed in the light of Wesleyan precedents and claims, is revolutionary in its nature.

The other root principle of difference between the Methodist New Connexion and Wesleyanism is in the power of the pastorate which the latter claims. Though the doctrine in its old form has been slightly modified by the

fact that the Wesleyan Conference has ceased to be exclusively ministerial, yet everything has been done which watchful ability could devise to guard the doctrine from invasion. The Pastoral Conference claims to be the final court, against which there lies no right of appeal, to determine all that is orthodox or heterodox in teaching ; all that is right or wrong in ministerial character and conduct ; all that is fit or unfit in ministerial qualifications ; what shall be the spheres of ministerial labour ; and further, as a final court, it claims jurisdiction over all cases of discipline and offence in relation to laymen. In Circuit administration the individual minister, by the power of nomination, opens or closes the door to nearly all Church offices and appointments, ordinarily admits persons to Church membership ; and while Leaders' Meetings have the power to declare whether an offence has been proved or not proved, the minister claims exclusive control to fix the penalty, and to determine how far it shall lean toward leniency or severity. This exaltation of pastoral authority is unparalleled in any Nonconformist community ; in many respects it is unequalled by the authority possessed by the clergy of the Established Church. The Methodist New Connexion, it must be confessed, allows no such doctrine of pastoral prerogative. Its Conference is supreme, as is the Wesleyan Pastoral Conference, in all decisions which relate to " Doctrine, Discipline, and Stations," but it is supreme as a joint Conference of ministers and laymen. It provides no separate section or session for ministers only, and has no reserve of questions for their exclusive control. It gives to ministers an equal representation with laymen in District Meetings and in the Conference, and in this balance of forces it is evident how large an influence ministers can apply to the determination of all Connexional questions. It gives to ministers the presidency of all ecclesiastical and Church Meetings, protects and upholds them in the preaching of the doctrines of the denomination ; but it associates with them, directly or representatively, the Churches in all which concerns reception or exclusion of members, and the control of Church interests generally. It assigns to them in all essential points a corresponding

position to that possessed by the older Free Churches of the nation. But it does not acknowledge the high Wesleyan claim which to so large an extent makes the pastor independent of and above the Church. The first Methodist agitation, in the great ministerial power it brought to view, did doubtless excite to watchfulness that this power should be reasonably limited in the formation of the new body. Considering, however, all the circumstances attending the first secession, the wonder is the swing of reaction did not lead to an extreme position, and we have to admire the moderation and balance preserved by the founders of the new ecclesiastical constitution.

Now, as the Methodist New Connexion was the first of the secessions from Wesleyan Methodism, originating in dissatisfaction with its ecclesiasticism, it has the right to be interested in the history and development of the Parent Body, and to trace out what approach it has made to the principles and proposals of the seceders. It is guilty of nothing intrusive in examining the points of agreement and divergence which, after the lapse of one hundred years, now exist between the two bodies, and in considering the probable verdict of history as to the rightness and reasonableness of the grounds on which the Methodist New Connexion was formed. The review need not involve any trace of bitterness. There should be care not to exaggerate differences, nor to attach undue importance to them, and an avoidance of needless conditions tending to create disturbances in the future. Still, the facts and lessons of history cannot be ignored, nor can the Methodist New Connexion be indifferent to the justification which has existed, and still exists, as to the Church constitution its fathers sought to establish.

If there had been adequate reasons for the disproportion of ministerial and lay power in the Wesleyan constitution in 1797, how is it that since then there have been successive times of unrest, agitation, and revolt developed in and by the constitution itself? These experiences cannot be accounted for by reference to external causes. No one has attempted so to explain them. Let the origin of the Methodist New Connexion be left out of account. Why should similar and

yet more extreme experiences of discontent afterwards sprung up? Have they not been of inward growth, and created internal causes? The fact is manifest; the forces ending these disruptions have come from within. And serious these disruptions have been, they would probably have been much more serious and widespread but for two conditions. One is the legal arrangement in Wesleyan Methodism which secures to the Conference its measure of control over the ecclesiastical property of the Connexion, so that to a very slight extent has such property been alienated. We are not complaining of the arrangement, but any one can see how much it will require before people will wrench themselves from sanctuaries which they or their forefathers built, around which dear associations cluster. Another condition restraining disruptive impulses is found in the extreme difficulty, on material and other lines, in creating a new denomination, or in blending a new secession with an existing one. The creation of a new and successful denomination requires an immense upheaval of force on the part both of the influential and common classes. The one signal illustration of such a creation in modern times is in the establishment of the Free Church of Scotland. There must be some adequate principle which leaders and people are prepared with great self-sacrifice to sustain. Otherwise, taking in account the disfavour with which divisions in themselves are regarded, the expensiveness of modern Methodistic growth compared with the economy of its growth in earlier years, the responsibility of leading a new secession may well make the bravest men tremble. An established denomination becomes entrenched in an ecclesiastical stronghold; occupies a vantage ground which requires long and arduous work for any new denomination to reach. Even admitting the comparative non-success of the denominations Wesleyan secessions have created, this by no means represents the measure of dissatisfaction the principles of the Wesleyan constitution have excited. Surely a constitution in itself wise, sound, and Scriptural, should not again and again produce conditions of unrest, and such developments suggest self-questioning as their causes. Had a provision existed in the constitution

of Methodism, in the earlier stages of its history, for the fair admission of laymen into its courts, and especially into the supreme court of Conference, unfettered by artificial restrictions of subjects they may not touch, not only would secessions have been prevented, but in every respect there would have been a consolidation of confidence and strength.

Next to the Methodist New Connexion, the Methodist denomination which stands specially identified with dissent from Wesleyan ecclesiastical principles is that of "The United Methodist Free Churches." This body is formed of several Wesleyan secessions constituted by two or three amalgamations. The earlier amalgamations created a denomination designated by the name of the Wesleyan Association, and this in turn united with the largest part of the secession force of 1849, and formed the denomination above named. In several respects this body shows an extremer reaction from the special features and elements of Wesleyanism than is represented by the Methodist New Connexion. This reaction is specially marked in relation to the Wesleyan idea of pastoral supremacy, and the power of Conference control. From the time of Mr. Wesley's death up to 1849 each agitation had led to a clearer assertion of ministerial authority. It culminated in the rough and sharp way in which, in 1849 and following years, so many thousands were excluded from Wesleyan societies. In Mr. Wesley's time preachers were mere lay-helpers; they were *his* helpers, outside the sphere of any Church authority. The Church Mr. Wesley recognised, and of which he claimed to be a minister (a minister, however, acting without episcopal sanction), was the Church of England as by law established. Ministers of this Church his helpers were not. Gradually, however, after his death they began to fulfil all the functions of the ministerial calling; they accepted the usual ministerial prefix to their names; they arranged for ordination as the sign of full ministerial power and qualification, and claimed a power in discipline, and a final, supreme authority over the Churches far exceeding that possessed by ministers in any Protestant Nonconformist community. Against this ministerial authority the opposition from time to time was strenuous and severe. In the formation, first of the

Wesleyan Association, and then of the United Methodist Free Churches, the opposition was most intense. It stamped its clearest impress upon the joint denomination. The limitations it imposed on ministerial authority were most definite. The minister presides in Church courts not by virtue of his office, but by the suffrage and consent of the Church. The authority committed to him in case of abuse can be withdrawn from him. He enters the door of the Annual Assembly by the same election as any other member enters. The parentage of these limitations and safeguards is as clear as day. They were suggested and moulded by those who had smarted under assertions of high ministerial prerogative. The one extreme is responsible for the rebound to the other extreme. The result is an ecclesiastical arrangement which asserts that the Church as distinct from the minister shall be supreme.

In a similar way the supreme power of the Wesleyan Conference, and the way it has been exercised, has had its issue in the limited power given to the Annual Assembly. The Assembly has a certain control over ministers ; it receives them, it can dismiss them ; it appoints them to spheres of labour, it can withdraw them ; it exercises guardianship over doctrines ; finally, it can cut off a circuit from its fellowship ; in other respects its power is limited. The men who gave shape to the constitution of this denomination were governed by a strong reaction in favour of Circuit independency. The Circuit must have authority over its own Churches, but it must not be subject to any other authority. No appeal must be carried from it to any higher court. The design has been to maintain the power of the Circuit, and yet to provide the measure of Connexionalism essential to the working of an itinerant ministry. The two requirements are difficult to balance, and circumstances may be conceived in which claims on the one side may be brought into sharp collision with claims on the other ; but so much of the spirit of wisdom and concession has prevailed, the peril of extreme assertion has been avoided, and on the whole the Connexionalism of the Denomination by the passing years has been strengthened.

It is pleasing to observe how extreme positions developed by unhappy agitations have been gradually softened by the

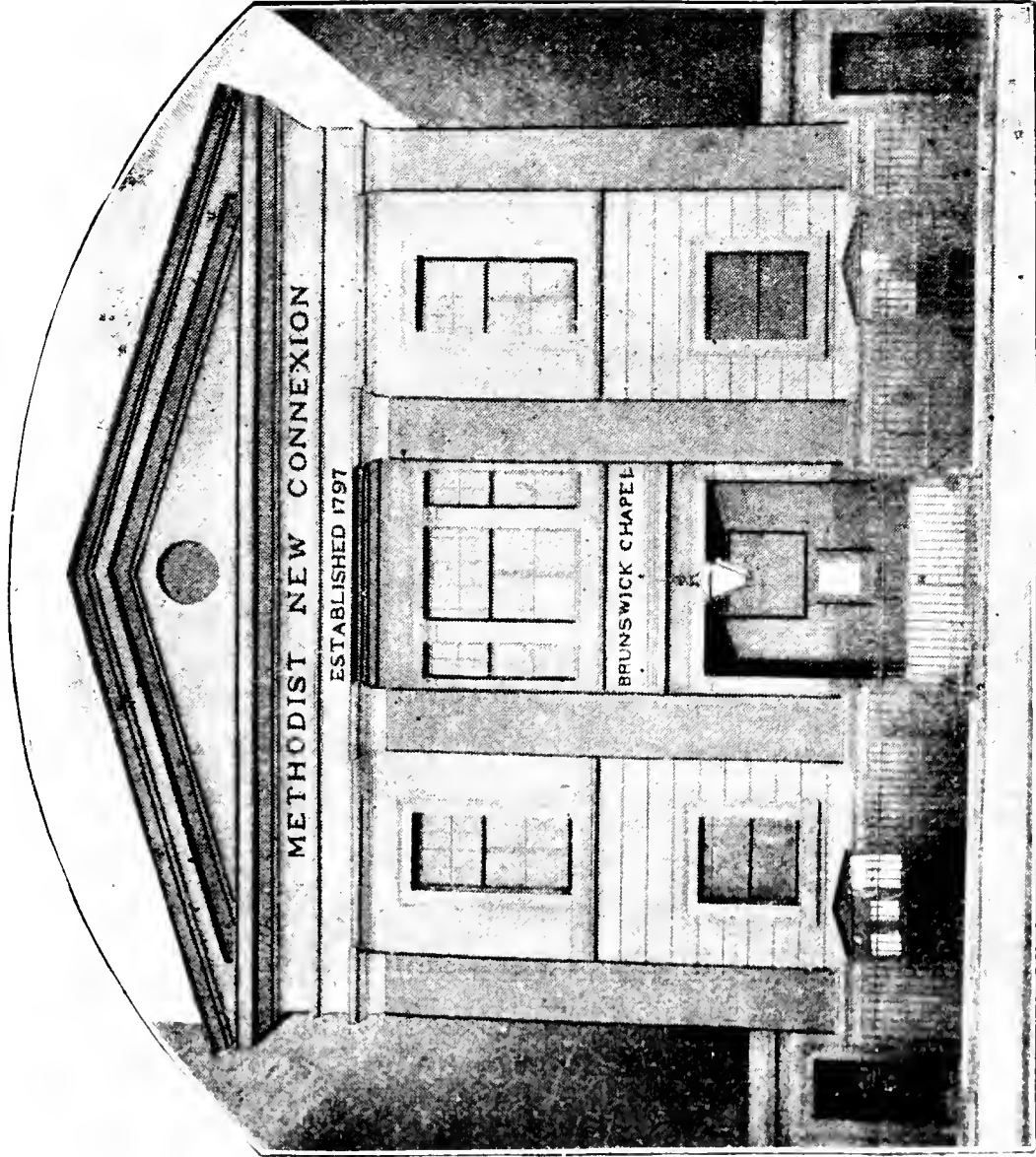
lapse of years, and how natural tendencies toward balance of forces come into play. High theories in respect to ministerial rule may not be formally relinquished, but in many cases a most gentle spirit of moderation tempers their application. Fair consideration of what is due to others has practical rule. The lessons of history have been clearly discerned, and personal prerogative is much less obtrusive than it formerly was. The theory of pastoral power remains ; its strong assertion is held in reserve. So on the other side. Constitutions may bristle with limitations and safeguards to keep pastoral power within rigid bounds ; in a quiet and voluntary way they are surrendered. Where ministers carry themselves wisely and graciously the usual rights and privileges of their office are cheerfully granted. They preside with as much regularity over Church Meetings as ministers do in communities to which such rights and privileges are constitutionally given. In the United Methodist Free Churches Assembly, to which the utmost freedom of election prevails, ministers generally constitute the larger proportion of the membership. Time to some extent softens and heals ; the spirit of jealousy engendered by past contention abates ; grievances, in so far as they are personal, in the natural order die away ; the heritage of strife and division becomes weaker ; and geniality of relations as between ministers and people grows.

Then the spirit of the age has a widely penetrating influence. There are many conditions touching men outside the special ecclesiastical circles with which they are identified ; and, socially and politically, not seldom do they develop on lines which are in conflict with these circles. A man, for instance, who has been trained in an ecclesiastical enclosure dominated by the democratic principle, in other associations may become committed to an entirely opposite principle, and the latter principle in course of time may weaken and overcome the former principle. Again, a man brought up in an ecclesiastical system which denies to its members generally any voice in its affairs, may be educated politically to become the advocate of popular rights and liberties, and he must surely be conscious of some lack of harmony in the forces of

the two associations. Church systems based on the voluntary principle are subject to the modifying power of many external influences. Communities entrenched in strongholds of endowments and independent of popular support are better able to withstand these influences, but indirectly and insensibly they operate in many ways, and they do much to reduce high claims on the one hand, and to establish reasonable authority on the other.

There have been two remarkable growths during the present century, entirely Methodistic in their character, and which claim sympathetic consideration. These are the denominations of the Primitive Methodists and of the Bible Christians. While in both cases the founders of these denominations had been Wesleyans, the movements by which they were originated were not marked in any special degree by disaffection toward the Wesleyan system of government : the strong impulse seems to have been to burst the bonds which restrained a free and individual evangelism. The Primitive Methodist denomination was the first commenced, though it is remarkable that two movements so much alike in the circumstances of their origin and in the methods of their operation should have been started within a few years of each other, and should have run on lines so parallel and simultaneous. It was doubtless in some respects an advantage to the movements that so little of the merely ecclesiastical entered into their inception. There was nothing to divide forces, or to divert from the oneness of the spiritual work.

The men who were leaders in the formation of Primitive Methodism were men inspired by a great spiritual fervour, but were unwilling to be restricted to methods having the sanction of Wesleyan authority. The Conference evidently had formed a purpose to put its hand of restraint on irregularities. Local conflict ensued. It is needless to repeat details. The issue was that a few men separated themselves from the Wesleyan body, and commenced independent methods of service. Possessing no buildings, they went into the highways and hedges, held out-door services, and accepted accommodation of the barest kind. They were men of wonderful energy and self-denial and



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resource, and in the course of some years the new movement acquired amazing success. But the men who worked it did so with more than human power ; they believed mightily in the gospel ; heaven and hell, the eternal gain of the soul and its eternal loss were grand realities to them ; and the love of Christ constraining them, with unshrinking courage they went forth to save the people. They were men for the most part who had been inured to hard labour and trained to subsist on limited means ; they were in a large degree indifferent to the temporalities of life and to its social conveniences. Their simplicities of life were severe. Hence, though the agents of Primitive Methodism greatly multiplied, the cost of their sustentation was relatively small. It must be remembered that in its origin Primitive Methodism did not receive its inspiration and guidance from those who had been separated to the work of the ministry ; it was a movement created and controlled exclusively by laymen. It was therefore less fettered by routine, by tradition, by pre-existing organisation and pattern, and so it showed an elasticity of adaptation to methods of service which would hardly have been possible under other conditions. As successes were gained, methods of consolidation were adopted, and men were set apart for keeping and training the people who had been gathered. Hence the ministry almost spontaneously grew out of the young life of the community, and had special adaptation for its conditions. It was a ministry which, in a simple but earnest way, directed and sustained an overflowing freshness and enthusiasm. In later years it has rapidly improved its culture, the change, however, being tinged by the mournful feature which surely is not inevitable, but too common to a cultured ministry—a relatively enfeebled power to put grasp upon the masses at large.

Primitive Methodism bears no manifest impress from any other Methodist body. In all its arrangements it is Methodist and Connexional, but at particular points showing considerable variation from what is ordinary in Methodism. Conservative and democratic elements exist in curious combinations. The Conference is constituted on a scale of representation which restricts its membership to a moderate number, and the area

and conditions governing election favour the selection of men of more than average maturity of judgment and experience. The more moderate the proportion of a Conference to the numerical return of its membership, and the less likely is impulse to prevail in its decisions. Then distinct regulations exist which give preference to age and experience, and which are repressive of tendencies to rashness. All members of the Conference must be office-bearers in circuits. Its permanent members are few, and in the case of the superannuation of ministers, and of physical disability on the part of laymen, they can be called upon to resign. The proportion of ministerial and lay members is rigidly fixed at one-third of the former and two-thirds of the latter. One or two further peculiarities may be noted.

All the formative influences in the origin of Primitive Methodism were intensely evangelistic in their character. We have said it bears no particular impress of any other body, though perhaps this statement should be so far modified as to say it is strongly stamped with some features of Wesleyanism, and with as strong a repudiation of other features. Those who were mainly instrumental in its formation had been Wesleyans. The only form of Church government with which they were familiar was the Wesleyan form. The class-leaders and local preachers had been the officials with which they had been acquainted and stood high in popular confidence. No disaffection had existed toward them. They were indispensable to the new movement. No ordained ministers, or ministers of any kind in the technical sense, had been connected with it. It had an entirely lay origin, and was worked by local preachers and class-leaders. It cannot therefore be a surprise that so much power was committed to them as officials. With some modifications they are the governing power in Primitive Methodism, and the holding of an office of some kind is an indispensable qualification to membership in the Conference. Its Leaders' Meetings, its Quarterly Meetings, its District Meetings are mainly composed of official members, and its Conference also. The Circuit preacher, the local preacher, the class-leader, the working official of some kind, are pre-eminent in all governing

meetings ; the private member hardly counts. The constitution in this respect bears a strong affinity to Wesleyanism. In this feature it is in striking contrast to the Methodist New Connexion, which provides for the representation of private members, or of the Churches generally, and not merely of its officials.

In another feature, however, Primitive Methodism, in the restricted functions and prerogative it grants to its ministers, has carried the reaction from the doctrine of the Wesleyan pastorate to the furthest extreme. In all that concerns ministerial arrangements there is a pervasive and penetrating revolt against pastoral supremacy. The minister has no right of presidency over Church or Circuit meetings, and the ministerial membership of the Conference cannot exceed one-third. It is not one-half as in the Methodist New Connexion, nor is the proportion open as in the United Methodist Free Churches. The evident design of this inflexible and precise arrangement is to prevent a possible predominance of ministerial influence in the Conference, and to maintain a permanent predominance of lay influence. We are not so acquainted with the history of the body as to be able to state the alleged reasons for the proportion, but the explanation is apparent when the early conditions governing its growth are considered. Ministerial power had led to the expulsion of some of its leaders from the Wesleyan body ; in the first stages of the growth of the young denomination there had been no ministerial guidance or leadership ; and lay influence had so far prevailed with so much success, it was decided by legal arrangement to perpetuate its supremacy. We hope there is no strained interpretation of facts in the surmise that these things had much to do in giving form and colour to the new ecclesiastical constitution. Its features are ministerial disability in relation to the Conference, legal predominance to lay officialism, and the absence of provision for the direct representation of the Church.

While the Connexionalism of the Primitive Methodists is strong, in one respect it has been guarded from the financial perils which beset the Connexionalism of other bodies, and in its provision for this purpose we may have a trace of the lay

predominance to which we have referred. The Conference—the central Connexional power—has declined responsibility, and has relieved stations from responsibility, in respect to deficient ministerial stipends. A minister must obtain his stipend from the station where he is appointed, and during the term of his appointment, or he cannot fasten responsibility on any one for its payment. So the Conference and stations are guarded against the difficulty of accumulated arrears. In relation to ministers the rigorous side of the arrangement is manifest, for the financial allowances have been spare in the extreme. It is one, however, which fastens upon them an ever-present responsibility, and is a stimulus to most wakeful attention. One of the problems to be solved is to find out and fix the just balance as between individual, local, and Connexional obligations. It is possible to carry Connexionalism to a point in which financial strain will reach the utmost tension ; but the arrangement to which reference has been made bears hardly upon a minister struggling with great difficulties, who, when he has done his best, is left without his proper stipend. Apart from this special arrangement, the Connexionalism of the denomination is strong.

The Conference is a large law-maker. A spirit of denominational loyalty and enthusiasm prevails. At an earlier period there was, even more than in other Methodist bodies, a spirit of great daring in the building of places of worship, and in the contraction of debts. But, on the whole, properties have been held with tenacious grasp. Debts have been greatly reduced. Annual returns are now secured of the state of Trust properties, income and expenditure, costs and debts, accommodation, which show grasp of administration, and the completeness of which compel admiration. New adjustments are being made in respect to the material conditions on which progress depends. It has been lately argued, by an ecclesiastic noted for his hostility to the New Connexion, that restricted pastoral prerogative, with free admission of laymen into all Church courts, is a bar to denominational growth. Primitive Methodism cannot be cited as an illustration in support of the argument. Its growth has been remarkable. It rapidly

increased in years past, and we trust a greater enlargement is in store for it in years to come.

Yet there is one element, general in its application, which on the human side seems to cloud expectation as to future progress. As denominations become consolidated, and their places of worship increase in costliness and beauty, as institutions become established and the culture of the ministry rises, so the forces of expansion decrease, and further growth involves larger expenditure of means and agencies. In its earlier history Primitive Methodism had marvellous conquest over material difficulties, and greatly progressed in spite of them. In modern times sites and structures mean much more cost, and it remains to be seen how less wealthy denominations can deal with new conditions.

It is remarkable that the formation of the Primitive Methodist denomination should have been followed in a few years by the rise of the Bible Christians. The conditions also giving birth to each denomination had a considerable resemblance. In this case there was no wide disaffection with the polity of Wesleyan Methodism broadly considered; the personal element in the first instance had the strongest influence. A Mr. O'Bryan, a local preacher, was unwilling to submit to regulations as sustained by Wesleyan superintendents, and on this account was excluded from the body. He would have preferred a sphere of labour in the Wesleyan body, perhaps in the Wesleyan ministry. But he did not suffer his exclusion to impose silence. He was too individual and independent to permit his liberty of action to be arrested. He had power to evoke sympathy and to win adherents; there were many to whom his ministry was a channel of saving power; converts were multiplied; and the forces and conditions increased which pressed toward a new Church organisation.

It must be noted in the case of the Bible Christians, as in that of the Primitive Methodists, how much was done and gained in aggressive work, apart from any regular ministerial aid. Doubtless the first agents employed were men possessing more than average native gifts; they had strong religious conviction, faith, and fervour; but they

were not men who had received any ordinary ministerial designation or training. They could, however, reach the common people and speak to them in a tongue they could understand. It must be remembered that many of Mr. Wesley's helpers had been men of this class. Where native gifts and spiritual sympathy combine in speakers, these give the power to reach the consciences and hearts of men. Then these agents penetrated into spheres which, Methodistically considered, had been unoccupied. They went to places which evangelistic appeal had not reached. And they had a success corresponding to that realised in the first days of Methodism.

It may also be urged, as in the case of the Primitive Methodists, that the extension of the Denomination depended in part upon its economy of administration. Service was remunerated on a low scale. The scale was less a matter of consideration by reason of the high motives which came into play. It, however, facilitated the employment of a larger number of workers, and contributed to the widespread creation of new interests in hamlets, villages, and districts which had been left with insufficient spiritual provision, or with provision ill-adapted to attract the sympathies of the people.

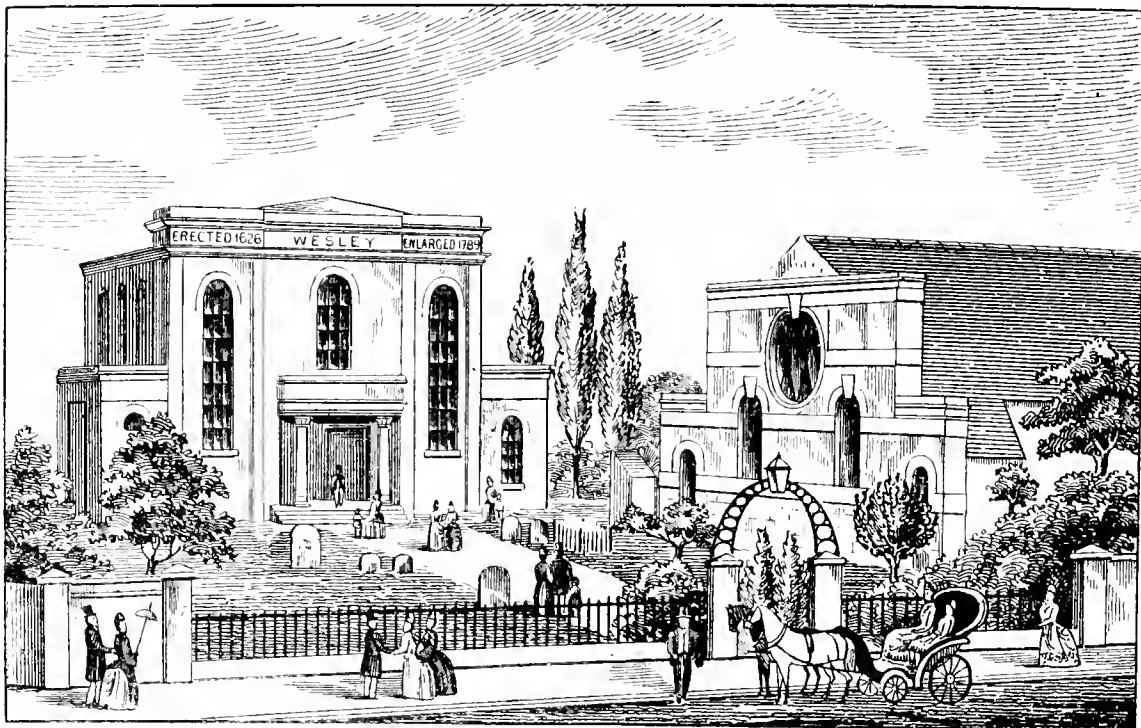
In the ecclesiastical relations of the Bible Christians and the Methodist New Connexion there are few essential principles of difference. They are nearly alike in the position and influence assigned to the minister; they agree in the main in the principle of equal ministerial and lay representation in the Conference. The representation the Bible Christians give is to districts rather than to circuits, but this does not involve any important principle. The representation also is so restricted that none but Circuit Stewards can be sent either to District Meetings or to Conference. There is in this a divergence from the Methodist New Connexion, which permits any member of a Church, without official distinction, to be sent. The Bible Christian arrangement has resemblance to the Wesleyan rule, except that Circuit Stewards are freely nominated and elected by Quarterly Meetings, a point at which the correspondence

returns to the Methodist New Connexion. A few new designations of offices, differing from those in use in other Methodist bodies, are employed by the Bible Christians, but they represent essentially the same things by other names. A chairman of a District is called its superintendent, and extra responsibility is laid upon him in respect to the state and business of the District. The office gives him power to attend each Quarterly Meeting of his District and, should he think well, to preside over the same. In this and other ways he comes to have intimate knowledge of the state of the District, and, assuming he has the administrative experience and power which his office implies, it affords him the opportunity of initiation and counsel which may be of the utmost service. The denomination is strongly Connexional. Its general administration is careful, vigorous, and comprehensive. With variations at particular points, the general resemblance of the constitution of this denomination to that of the Methodist New Connexion is evident. Year by year elements of practical difficulty as they have existed between the two denominations are diminishing in force.

Of other branches of Methodism in Great Britain not many observations are required. The great secession from Wesleyan Methodism in 1849 and subsequent years had sad aspects, but its most mournful one was the considerable proportion of it which drifted away without finding any other spiritual home. For a time it was pleaded there must be no secession, but in the actual exclusions which took place, and in the separate services commenced, the cry proved empty. Notwithstanding the scattering influence of the agitation, a considerable number of new Churches were formed. As we have noticed, the larger proportion of these amalgamated with the Wesleyan Association, but many continued their independent life under the name of Wesleyan Reformers. The name will have its historic association. To a limited extent this body recognises and sustains a ministry, but a ministry subject to precarious conditions. It is a ministry which meets conditions of convenience, and to which no Connexional responsibility is attached. In other respects also this denomination bears the mark of extremest distance from the parent body. The

Connexional tie is slender; the Congregational idea of liberty and independence is strong. Why has development been on these lines? The Reform Churches are another illustration of the strong feeling engendered in Wesleyanism itself alike against its doctrine of ministerial authority and power of Conference rule.

We admit that this feeling, in lesser and greater degrees, common to all Methodist secessions, is one to be regretted. It is sad that distrust in relation to the ministry should to such an extent have been brought into existence. We know



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of nothing to compare with it in other denominations. The relation to be desired between ministers and people is one of unity, love, and trustfulness, and this is the relation which so greatly helps to promote the restfulness and peace of the Churches. Friction as between ministers and people is abnormal. What are the main causes of it? Sacerdotal claims and affectations on the one hand, and an exaggerated doctrine of ministerial authority on the other. The responsibility of friction in ministerial relations to the people, as it has existed in Methodism, is with those who have exalted pastoral authority to so extreme a point, and who have shown its

exercise in such swift and large excisions from the Churches. This disaffection has had its main springs in the Wesleyan body. It has been cast out from time to time by exclusions and secessions, but its origin is one of the clearest facts in history. Loyalty of regard to ministers has been weakened by aggressiveness of ministerial claims, and the reaction has had its expression in subsequent attempts to fence and limit ministerial prerogative. We are not the apologists for what has been hard and extreme in these attempts. The passing away of the years, however, has had its softening influence. It is difficult to say how long a time it requires to outlive the inherited results of agitation, and the alteration of conditions to which legal protection has been given is always difficult. But a greatly improved spirit prevails ; we are coming nearer the just balance which extremes have so much disturbed ; and as rights of ministers and rights of laymen come to be better understood and mutually respected, so will Methodism be blessed with a large and permanent peace.

There is another small section of Methodists under the name of "Independent Methodists." If we are not mistaken this body stands on a principle which repudiates a separated ministry entirely, and in so far stands aloof from Methodism at large. In some localities, under favourable conditions, where gifted men consecrate their service to the Churches, they thrive. We have seen the great power which lay preaching has been in the past, and the successes which some of the denominations in their initial stages have obtained by this agency. The tendency in later years has been to its undue displacement. We deprecate influences which lead to its enfeeblement. All that is practicable should be done to encourage and nurture its efficiency. While we hold entirely to the Scriptural sanction of men being called and set apart to the full work of the ministry, we are not now called upon to enter into controversy with those who are seeking to uphold Churches by entirely free service. It is evident how limited is the area such Churches occupy, and how immensely they fall below the spiritual needs of society. Their places of worship do not number more than between one and two hundred.

The Methodism of Great Britain and Ireland, the sphere of its origin and first triumphs, forms a comparatively small section of the whole of Methodism. It seems insignificant compared with the world's Methodism. In the United States of America, in the British American Colonies, in the colonies of Australia and Africa, and in other parts it has shown itself to be a most enterprising and aggressive form of Christianity, having special adaptations for pioneer work and needs. In its various branches there is reason to think that its progress has exceeded that of any other denomination. The youth of Methodism, if such a phrase may be used, must be compared with the age of other denominations. It had no advantages of long consolidation and of stored-up resources and experience. But in its provision of itinerant labour, in its Circuit divisions, in its facile enlistment of lay preaching, in the oversight exercised by leaders, in the general control of District Meetings and Conferences, it has proved itself one of the most elastic and successful organisations for overtaking the needs of new settlements and of scattered populations. The progress of Methodism outside Great Britain and Ireland in all Anglo-speaking countries has been remarkable.

What have been the ecclesiastical developments of Methodism in other lands? They have shown a considerable resemblance to those at home. In its first spread it was shaped generally after the fashion of the pattern presented by the Parent Body, with the addition in America of the Episcopal element. The same pastoral stamp was impressed upon it, and the laymen of the newer Methodism were subject to the same rigid exclusion from its various Conferences. The point, however, to be emphasised is that in new spheres, as in the old ones, the same restrictions led on to the same dissatisfaction. The lack of equitable balance as between ministers and laymen created the unrestfulness which has marked Methodist history here. The lines of consequences proceeding from the same conditions cannot but be noticed. It is not needful to particularise all Methodist divisions and secessions which have taken place in America. In the aggregate the numbers in the States dissenting from the Methodist Episcopal Church is very large. The Methodist Protestant

Church, established on lines almost parallel to those of the Methodist New Connexion, has a large membership. The Methodist Episcopal Church in its several branches is a Church of immense magnitude. While retaining bishops, and giving to them a measure of power which we hear of with surprise, it also admits laymen into its Conferences, and there are signs of an enlargement of the freedom granted.

We will pass over other details, and make particular reference to the Methodist Church of Canada. It presents a clear illustration of the recent great change in Methodist ecclesiastical conditions, and is a signal instance of the triumph of Methodist Union. It shows how extremes have been brought together, how diversities of ecclesiastical life have been fused, and it carries with it suggestive influence as to methods and conditions of re-uniting divided Methodism in other lands. In 1874 a first union had been effected in Canada between the Wesleyan Methodists and the Methodist New Connexion, the two bodies when united accepting the name of the Methodist Church. In 1884 this united Church effected a further union with the Methodist Episcopal Church, the Primitive Methodist Church, and the Bible Christian Church, all the five sections being now known by the designation of the Methodist Church of Canada. So these varied ecclesiastical systems, at some points standing so widely apart, have been brought together and fashioned after one ecclesiastical pattern. A fair length of time has passed for putting its provisions and workings to a test, and it is said with the happiest results. The following is the outline of the constitution of this Church, which now includes the above named Methodist bodies.

Its general Conference assembles each fourth year, and is composed of an equal number of ministerial and lay members. This is the highest court, and makes rules and regulations for the entire Church. It elects by ballot one or more general superintendents, whose term of office is eight years, but they can be re-elected. A general superintendent presides over the General Conference, and over all standing Committees of the same. The office is one of high distinction and large influence, and gives to a man of administrative capacity

opportunity for great service. The General Conference cannot alter the standards of doctrine, nor abolish the itinerancy, nor take from ministers or members the privilege of trial and appeal. • Nor can it make changes in the general rules except by a three-fourths majority, or a two-thirds majority of each order when voting separately ; nor can it change the basis of union except by similar majorities. It appoints a special Committee of twelve ministers and twelve laymen, which acts with large authority between one Conference and another, but must report its proceedings. This Committee has power to call a special session of the General Conference. The General Conference also appoints by ballot a Court of Appeal, which consists of twelve ministers and twelve laymen, and has wide scope in hearing and determining cases of difficulty and conflict. It must also report to the General Conference. The next important court is the Annual Conference, composed of all ministers within a defined area, and of an equal number of laymen. It elects by ballot, and without debate, its own President and Secretary. Each Conference has a Stationing Committee, composed of the President, Chairmen of Districts, and one minister elected by each District Meeting. A layman does not sit on this Committee, but the ministers are elected by joint votes of ministers and laymen. The Annual Conference receives ministers into full connexion ; it elects by ballot, according to scale, members of the General Conference, ministers voting only for ministers, and laymen voting only for laymen. It has power without a formal trial to locate an unacceptable or inefficient minister—that is, to set him aside by simply returning his subscriptions to the Superannuation Fund. Each Annual Conference holds a special session, called the Ministerial Session, for business to be transacted by ministers alone, and is to be held one day prior to the meeting of the Conference, or at the call of the President. Its main purpose appears to be to examine the character and qualifications of ministers and probationers for the ministry, its decisions to be final except in cases of appeal on questions of law. The time for this ministerial session is brief, and it has no range of power such as is possessed by the Wesleyan Pastoral Con-

ference. The Stationing Committee is alike accessible to ministers, and to persons deputed by circuits. The limit of itinerant service was three years, but now, for exceptional reasons, and on the basis of a three-fourths vote by ballot by a Quarter Board, and a two-thirds majority by the Stationing Committee, the term can be extended to four or five years. A District Meeting is composed of all ministers and probationers for the ministry within its bounds, and of a corresponding number of laymen elected by ballot by Quarter Boards. It has one session or sessions when ministers meet by themselves, the business relating to ministerial character and work, and to the examination of probationers. Such examinations are exceptionally minute and comprehensive. As evidence of the tone of the ministry, and doubtless of the community, in respect to the social influence of ministers, it may be said that questions regarding abstinence from alcoholic drinks and other personal habits are most explicit and stringent, and any failure to comply with the standard required is a bar to continuance on probation. The Conference makes considerable provision for the education of ministers, and examinations are framed to meet a scale of higher attainments. All other business done by District Meetings is by joint sessions of ministers and laymen, save that for the purpose of electing lay representatives to the Annual Conference laymen act by themselves.

No official qualification appears to be required for membership in the Conference; but a member elected must be at least twenty-five years of age, and he must have been five continuous years a member of the Church. The Meeting appoints one minister and one layman to audit all Circuit and District schedules. A financial District Meeting is held each year, which has a smaller membership, its main business being to adjust Connexional finances as they touch the district. Somewhat extensive powers are committed to the Chairman of a district, and much administrative work falls upon him. The Quarterly Official Board in its main features corresponds to the Circuit Quarterly Meeting as known in Methodism. It is largely constituted of various officials, but a proportion of its members can be appointed by societies.

In circuits which have no Local Preachers' Meeting, and in small societies which have no Leaders' Meeting, the Board undertakes the duties these meetings usually fulfil. The Superintendent has considerable power of nomination, and he can appoint leaders and assistants, but not contrary to the wish of a class, or without consulting a Leaders' Meeting. He must leave for his successor a Circuit book with an exact list of official members, and the names of all the members of his Circuit. Local Preachers' Meetings are on ordinary lines. A Leaders' Meeting is composed of ministers, stewards and leaders. It receives persons into the full membership of the Church ; it exercises oversight over the conduct of members. Those who neglect the means of grace are to be visited and admonished, and if they continue the neglect must receive notice of exclusion. Nevertheless they have the privilege of appearing before the Leaders' Meeting or Quarterly Official Board to show cause why their names should be continued on the roll of membership, and with promise of amendment they are to be borne with. The functions of the Leaders' Meeting appear to be meagrely defined. A meeting not familiar to British Methodism is called the Stewards' Meeting. It deals with the finances of a Circuit, and arranges that responsibilities are met. Society Meetings are held for spiritual edification ; but they also appoint representatives to the Quarterly Official Board.

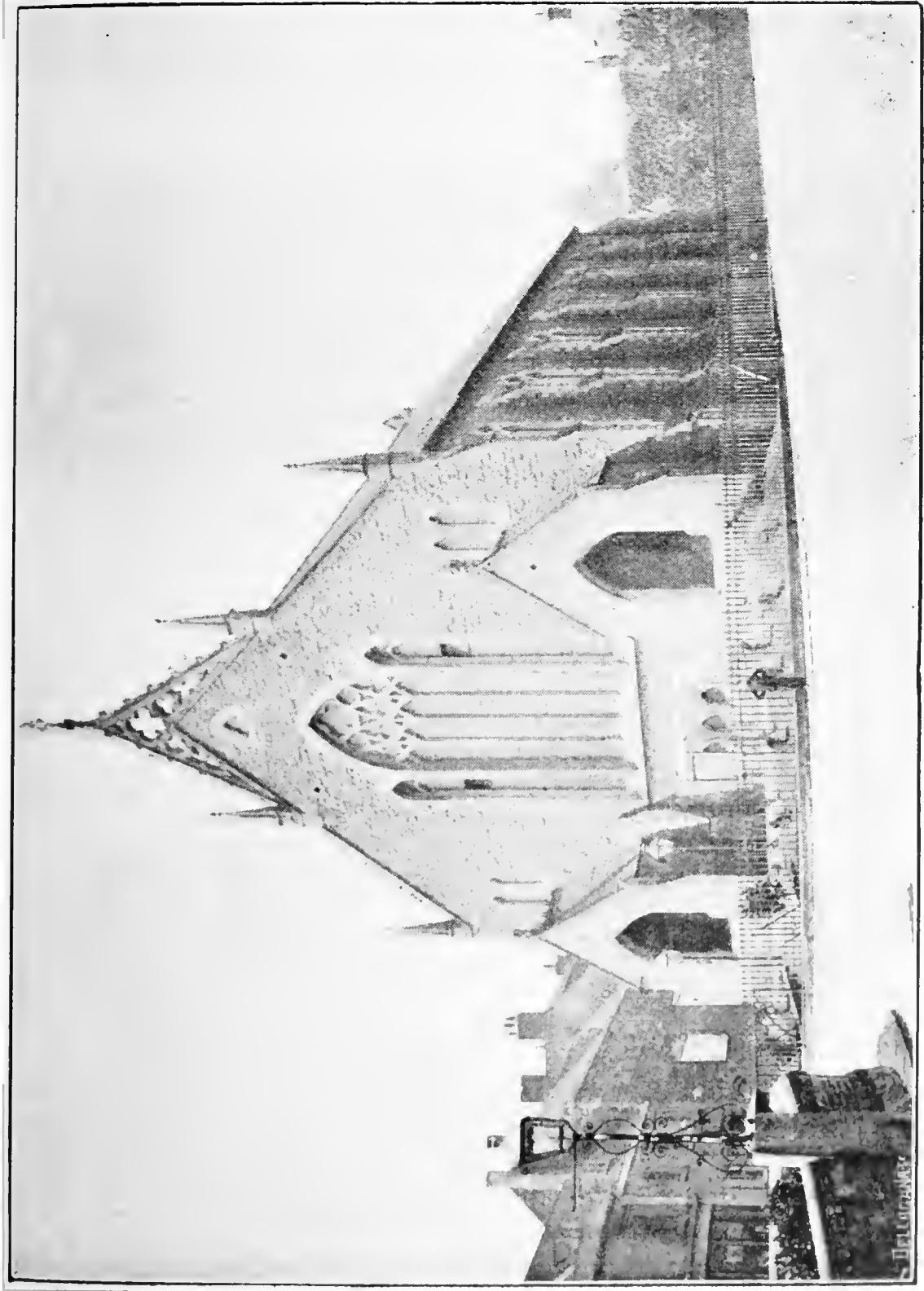
We have given this outline of the constitution of the Methodist Church of Canada because of our past relation as a denomination to a portion of this Church, because so many sections of Methodism have been included in it, and because it is a greater experiment in Methodist amalgamation than any which has before taken place. It comprises nearly all ecclesiastical elements to be found in Methodism, save that of Circuit independency, but with new combinations and balances ; and if in so large a denomination the constitution has helped to create loyalty and peace and success this fact will speak its volume of meaning. It may be said that not a little has been retained ecclesiastically of each of the denominations now brought to organic oneness. In the office of general superintendent, with the large powers

assigned to it, a practical episcopal element remains. But in the term of the election, and in the control the General Conference has over the appointments, the checks to any stretch of personal prerogative are strong. When the utility of the office is no longer apparent it can easily be abolished. In a Church which covers so large a territory, with its distant and widely separated Annual Conferences, some arrangement in the form of general supervision seems essential to link one part with another, and to maintain the wider Connexional unity. In the offices also of Presidents of Annual Conferences and of Chairmen of Districts some practical degree of the Episcopal element may be discerned, but appointments to these offices are annual and they are under Conference control. In the separate ministerial sessions granted to Conferences and District Meetings, and in the nominating power which is given to ministers, there is much of the Wesleyan stamp, but there is somewhat of a balance to this in the separate sessions permitted to laymen, and it must be observed that neither in theory nor practice is any such range of power claimed for a Pastoral Conference as is claimed in the Wesleyan Conference. The difference is fundamental and wide. In the large ex-officio element in Quarterly Meetings there is simply a continuance of the same feature as previously prevailed in all the sections brought together, save in the New Connexion, and its own definite principle that the societies or church should be represented is distinctly provided for. Then in the fact that the General Conference and the Annual Conferences and the District Meetings and Committees are constituted on the principle of equal ministerial and lay representation there is the clear manifestation of the Methodist New Connexion impress. We do not care to encourage any appearance of triumph of one particular section. In the five sections brought together there were complex and conflicting elements, and in the endeavour to effect union it is reasonable to expect there should be concessions on all sides. Evidently this has been the case. The result is a constitution, not theoretically perfect, it may be, looked at from any one point, but which is purged of many of the elements which

have worked divisively in the past, containing many definitely liberal provisions, admitting popular control, and one which so far has worked with harmony and success.

It will be known that a movement, corresponding to the one completed in Canada, for some years has been working in Australia. Of late it has received considerably increased support. As the final issues are still in reserve it is better to refrain from discussion. Whether the movement be successful, or in what degree successful, remains to be seen ; but it indicates tendencies which cannot be repressed, and its significance is easy to discern.

It will be seen then from the general review and comparison we have attempted, how far the principles which led to the first Methodist agitation, and for the maintenance of which the Methodist New Connexion was originated, have been adopted in Methodism generally, and the educational influence they have had. Is it now denied that societies have the claim to be considered Churches? Is it now denied that Methodist preachers should be invested with the full functions of the ministry? Is it now denied that laymen should have any right to represent Churches in Conference? It is not contended that lay representation has been adopted by all the Methodist denominations in the same way and degree. It has been accompanied by some needless limitations and reserves. Providing a principle be fairly and frankly accepted, we cannot plead for a strenuous uniformity in its application. The least degree of acceptance of lay representation has been granted by the Wesleyan Conference, the most vital things being still withheld from its sphere of influence. Still the acceptance granted has much significance. All the objections raised to it on the ground of legal hindrance have been brushed aside. The power of the Legal Hundred, while admitted as a fact, in its practical influence has come to be a shadow. It is seen that if changes adopted can have a practical incorporation in the constitution, on the same lines further changes are also practicable. So far there has been no finality. Lay representation was granted by the Wesleyan Conference in 1877. It was formed on a plan to maintain a sharp distinction as to Church questions laymen



ST. PAUL'S, GUERNSEY.

might not touch. This plan has often been represented as involving a solemn compact. But a compact with whom? Had the laity been convened to agree to it? A compact binds those who have been parties to it. An influential Conference Committee has recently reported in favour of the Representative Conference sitting before the Pastoral Conference. The Report has been received by a considerable section of ministers with a feeling approaching consternation. The recommendation to change the order of sessions, simple as it seems, fills them with foreboding. If nothing but a question of convenience were involved in the change, why the need for concern? The concern is based on the fear that in the matter of lay representation finality has not been reached. The line of cleavage as to questions pastoral and not pastoral may be disturbed. There is the apprehension that the settlement of 1877 may be unsettled, a fear of developments in store. Have we not a sign in what is now taking place that when a principle is true in itself, its application cannot be circumscribed by mere artificial boundaries? Either it must be suppressed or it will work its way to the logical and legitimate limits of its sphere. In the changes which have taken place, and are still taking place, we have evidence of the soundness of the principle of lay representation the Methodist New Connexion adopted, which for eighty years the Wesleyan Conference refused, and for the last twenty years in partial form it has adopted. We plead guilty to no intrusive meddling in discussing this question. Mainly on account of the non-recognition of lay rights, much to the pain and sacrifice of its first members, the Methodist New Connexion was forced into a separate existence, and its legitimate interest in the question cannot be denied. We are not setting up the Methodist New Connexion as the ecclesiastical constitution according to the pattern of which all other Methodist bodies must be moulded. Outward details and forms cannot be made permanently binding. But essential principles are suitable for all times. It is for the full and generous application of principles we plead. In forms of institutions and methods of working diversity and elasticity may prevail.

The smaller denominations at all times have ordinary difficulties to overcome in the general run of social influence toward conditions of magnitude; but in some cases they have their special difficulties in the prejudice it is sought to excite toward them by the use of unjustifiable epithets and comparisons. We do not revive earlier memories of this kind: the modern attempts in this direction are in every respect to be deplored. It is too late, surely, save with a narrow section, to associate the term "republicanism" with the first Methodist Reform movement. For a long period succeeding the French Revolution the name was odious to a large number of the people of this country, and the attempt to identify lay representation in Church courts with a revolutionary action in politics was in no small degree successful. But a nation which by degrees has obtained household suffrage, in which representation counts for so much in so many forms in our national life, will not be permanently scared by the revived use of the word "republicanism." The aim of the association is not worthy. The principle of giving a voice to the people was acted upon in the primitive Church; its most important offices were filled by their approval. The principle has a widespread application in Free Churches that pastors, elders, deacons, should be chosen by the Churches. And surely it is no unreasonable or extraordinary course for a Methodist denomination to appoint a proportion of its members to act on its behalf in a Synod, or Assembly, or Conference. Further, we express disapproval of the revived efforts to depreciate the first Methodist reform by the statement that its purpose was to degrade the ministry, and to govern it by the principle of "hire." Certainly it had in view the limitation of inordinate ministerial power, to provide that the Church should speak as well as the minister, and to give a balance to the absolute supremacy of the ministry in Conference by securing the introduction of the laity. But the endeavour to limit the extreme power of the ministry did not put degradation upon it. Indeed, in several respects the agitation which issued in the formation of the Methodist New Connexion had in view the exaltation of the ministry. In Mr. Wesley's time he had

treated preachers merely as laymen. They were his servants or helpers. Without trial or power of appeal he could dismiss them whenever he judged well. Their position and prospects depended on his personal will. Surely this was not a ministerial status according to the New Testament idea. Mr. Wesley never asserted that it was. He and other ordained ministers could fulfil functions which he never permitted his helpers to attempt. The aim of those who worked in the movement which led on to the Methodist New Connexion was to emancipate the preachers from the restrictions and disabilities to which they had been subject, and to invest them with ordinary ministerial power. They desired to free them from dependence upon a class, and to give them the support of the Church as a whole, and so to ensure for them a legitimate independence. We claim that the first Methodist reformers had not in view the "degradation" of the ministry; their object was to elevate it by giving to preachers powers parallel to those possessed by other Free Churches.

The subject assigned for discussion in this chapter has naturally led to a review of the causes which have led to existing Methodist divisions and to varying denominational characteristics. Such knowledge is fitted to increase tenderness in the consideration of denominational peculiarities and difficulties. When an ecclesiastical constitution is once formed, strong influences immediately operate to give it fixedness. The points which are denominationally distinctive are those to which special importance is attached, and, as legal protection is soon found to be essential, they are the points for which legal permanence is earliest sought. And where the legal fixity has not been created one or two generations must pass before a fair opportunity comes to modify them. We set forth the heritage of advantages, but not always the heritage of difficulties. The remoulding of a constitution involves much more than appears on the surface. In those denominations which have been wise to provide legal liberty to effect desired changes the work is less difficult, but where much of legal committal has been permitted it is more so. The most elastic method of

obtaining changes exists in the Parent Body, because the Legal Hundred so uniformly and readily confirms. The way by which lay representation was secured is a way by which almost any measure of change could be secured. In other cases changes can be secured only as opinion fully ripens for them, and as legal hindrances do not block the way. Hence in the relation of Methodist denominations toward each other mutual difficulties should be understood and respected. Things which tend to irritation and conflict should be repressed. Assumptions of superiority should be put away. Granting that the temporal and social elevation of one denomination may be higher than another, is this a reason for disdainful attitude toward those in less favoured conditions? The different sections should act encouragingly and graciously toward each other.

Referring more particularly to the Methodist New Connexion, we venture to think it will continue its modest bearing toward sister denominations. It may be hinted its numerical and other limitations suggest this course to be appropriate, but were conditions exactly opposite the same bearing should be continued, because it is gracious and beautiful. With all this there may be the firmest conviction of the lawfulness of our separate denominational existence, intelligent and unswerving loyalty to its principles, defence of them when occasion requires, and temperate advocacy of them. But this does not involve boastfulness, and is quite consistent with all courteousness of relation toward others. We advise no mission of ecclesiastical propagandism; the reasonableness and vitality of our principles will be made more manifest with the lapse of years. Time has operated as our defence in the past; it is displaying more and more the widespread influence of our constitution. We can in quietness await the developments of the future. Principles which have life in them grow, and though the growth may be hindered it cannot be permanently arrested. The less attempt there is to force change of opinion in Methodism the more likely it is to come; the liberalising spirit of the age will operate; and as new difficulties require solution, and new situations create new tests, so the approximations to

the essential principles of the Methodist New Connexion constitution will increase.

It is difficult to repress anticipations, and yet hazardous to express them, concerning the future of Methodistic divisions. Are they to be indefinitely perpetuated? Such a prospect is not cheering. We cherish the hope that practical conditions of oneness will so increase, and theoretical differences so melt away, that it will be easy for the sections to blend and hard for them to keep apart. We cherish this hope in respect to the future without casting condemnation on the past. Are the distinctions and differences between all the Methodist denominations sufficient to keep them all permanently apart; or have not some of them become relatively of so much less importance little more is needed to bring some of the denominations together than increase of mutual esteem and love? Union has been effected between denominations having much in common, though separated by some things in which they have differed; and union has been accomplished between different Methodist denominations. It must be admitted that some attempts in this direction have not had an encouraging issue. It may be they were prematurely started. There had not been a sufficient consideration of difficulties, nor a counting of the cost, nor mutual conditions of needful ripeness of feeling. It has been so in other Churches. The Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterians carried on negotiations for ten years with a view to union, during which the abilities and patience of most eminent men were taxed to the utmost degree, and yet sorrowfully to these men, and to a large proportion of the Churches, because a minority had power to interpose great difficulties, the negotiations had then to be closed. Yet as we have said, other attempts at union have succeeded. It has been so in several instances with Presbyterian sections; and also with Methodist sections. It is desirable, however, before attempts in this direction are undertaken, the best judgment should be exercised as to the opportuneness of the occasion and the general preparedness of conditions. We express our opinion that to some extent union ought to come and will come. There has been and

will still be surrender of separating elements. Stronger forces will operate constraining to mutual defence and helpfulness. The scope of the comprehension we do not attempt to foretell. Some elements still exist which work toward division. It will be seen the influence which time has upon them. So far there has been no stay in respect to ecclesiastical conditions not wisely and equitably formed. Should the dissolving process in respect to needless divisive elements work on in the future as it has done in the past, why should there not be a comprehensive and united Methodism in Great Britain as there is in Canada, and as there is a promise of elsewhere?

Meanwhile the relations of the Methodist New Connexion to other Methodist bodies must be those of the utmost friendliness. While reserving its freedom at suitable times and in courteous ways to uphold its own principles, it must cultivate the spirit of fellowship with the common family. That is no true fellowship which is based on a bargain of silence in respect to things lawful and important in their place. It is inevitable there must be discussion in respect to the elements which make for separation in Methodism, and when rightly conducted it should be no bar to cordiality of relations. Still things lawful can have disproportionate prominence. This chapter is necessarily ecclesiastical in its character. But it should be remembered that in relation to the spiritual the ecclesiastical has a secondary place, and should be held in subordination to that which is higher. A Church constitution, however symmetrical and well-balanced, does not in itself ensure spiritual results, it is not an instrument by which souls can be won. Unless worked by Church members who are the true servants of Christ it will be a feeble and barren thing. It is newness of life, fulness of sympathy, the love of Christ, the baptism of the Holy Spirit, which brings power to a Church, and not the ecclesiastical system to which it is linked. The supreme and constant aim must be to make the Church true, vital, and complete in every spiritual condition and work.

The Methodist New Connexion must do its own work with zeal and faithfulness, improve all its opportunities for growth

in present spheres, and embrace openings for extension when possible. But in commitments to responsibilities and the creation of obligations, it must "count the cost" and consider how its strength and resources stand related to its undertakings. It is not wise in itself, it is most undesirable when our relation to other denominations is considered, that future income should be heavily mortgaged and a general impression of financial embarrassment created. Then where the Connexional principle is strong, special care is needed not to put it to undue strain, and that it should be so applied as to strengthen and not weaken local responsibility. There are changed social and economical conditions which touch all denominations, but are most burdensome to the smaller ones. In all, therefore, which relates to enterprise and administration liberality, strength and foresight are required. But with wise and faithful use of means, and earnest dependence upon the Divine blessing, the Denomination will be able to avoid needless conditions of disheartenment, to maintain freedom and independence, to secure enlargement; and whatever may be the calls and developments of the future, answering or not answering to cherished anticipations, it will possess the best preparedness to meet them.

William Longbottom

THE SPIRITUAL LIFE AND AIMS

OF THE

METHODIST NEW CONNEXION

REV THOS. RIDER

THE Methodist New Connexion claims to be a true branch of the Church of our Lord Jesus Christ. Should its members be called upon to vindicate and establish that claim, they can point to the scripturalness of its principles and ordinances, to the fidelity of its gospel ministry, and to its spiritual assemblies which meet in the name of Christ: "Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I in the midst of them." But there is no proof of genuine Churchmanship so cogent and irrefragable as the indisputable possession of the Spirit of Christ: "I am the Vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me and I in him bringeth forth much fruit." If the fruit of which the Saviour speaks is to be found in the salvation of souls, and the building up of believers in a consecrated and holy life, and in manifold ministries for the establishment and spread of that kingdom which is "righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Ghost," the Methodist New Connexion people may very well rest in the assurance that they form part of that Church of the Living God which is "the pillar and ground of truth." It is true that the fathers and founders of the Community were thrown into distinct and definite association because of their earnest advocacy

of what they deemed to be true and scriptural principles of Church polity. But they understood very clearly that the life of the Church did not depend on ecclesiastical arrangement and principles. These matters might affect the quiet and orderly and successful fulfilment of the duties and ministries of Church life ; but the life itself was something more and greater than even scriptural organisation. Whilst, therefore, these men were earnest in their advocacy of just and scriptural principles of Church government, and suffered without murmuring many and severe disabilities and persecutions for their fidelity to conviction, they were vastly more solicitous about the preaching of the gospel of Christ and the salvation of the people from their sins. There can be no doubt that in the early days of the Community there were many who attached themselves to the cause through an intelligent sympathy with the principles of scriptural liberty and order, which were propounded by the preachers of what was called the New Itinerancy ; but very many more were drawn by a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to find the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. With both preachers and people ecclesiastical arrangements were secondary matters, and the chief desire was to gather people out of the world, and bring them into the light of a nobler and holier life. But those who were thus allured to Christ, and who became His disciples, were also, by the very nature of the new life that was in them, drawn together, and felt that they not only ought, but that they must, meet together for fellowship and prayer. Hence their assemblies grew and multiplied, and became by the law of their spiritual life and development so many Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ. As these Churches increased in number, and became more and more animated by the Spirit of the Master, it was found necessary that they should be organised into a distinct Community in order that its special testimony might be borne, and its work for Christ more effectively accomplished. Hence arose the religious body which is designated the Methodist New Connexion.

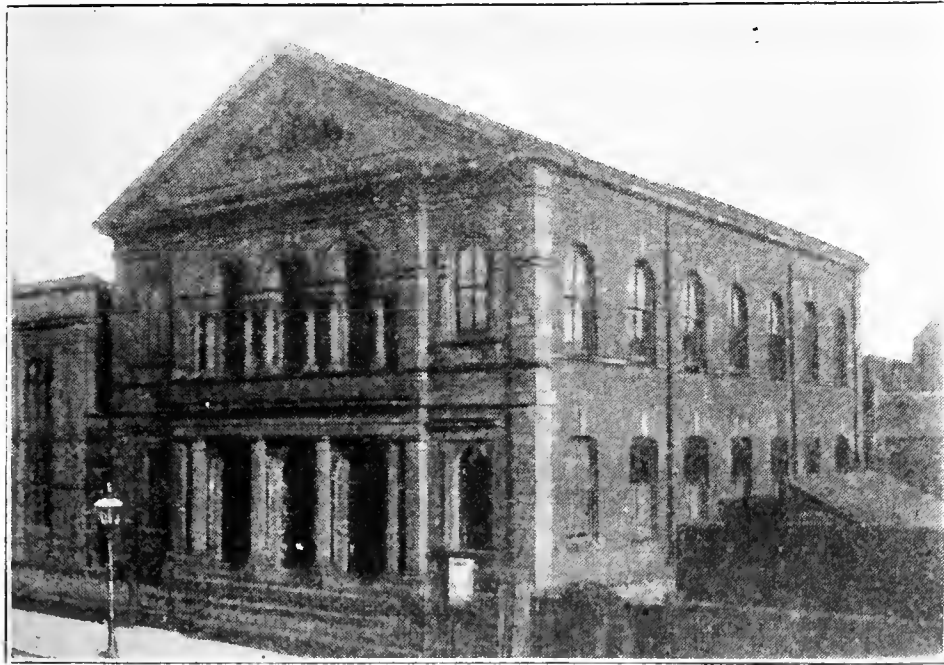
A century of our existence as a Community has passed away, and we are led very naturally to review our position

and our prospects. After the wear and tear of many trials, and the sifting of our principles and methods, by friendly and unfriendly criticism, and the testing of those principles by the inexorable logic of events, how do we stand as a religious Community to-day? This question, so far as it relates to our ecclesiastical principles and status, is treated elsewhere. But the vital and more important question is still before us, How do we stand as a spiritual organisation? How beats the life of the Eternal Spirit in the hearts of our people? and what are the purposes we cherish in relation to the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ? Our principles of Church order may be in perfect accord with the teaching of the Divine Word, and with the mind of the Spirit; but if we have in any measure lost the spiritual marks of a true Church, our future will be one of degeneracy and death. A broad and comprehensive view of our position to-day fairly warrants the claim that, in the light of the New Testament teaching, we have still the notes of a true Church of our Lord Jesus Christ, and that we stand in the unity of the Spirit, in the holiness of consecrated lives, in the catholicity of our sympathy with all who love the Saviour in sincerity, in the apostolicity of our doctrine and Church order, and growth in strength and numbers, and in power of service in the cause of the Master we love and follow.

It is true that some may ask, and do ask, How can we claim unity in any real and effective sense whilst we maintain our separate existence as a religious body? But the objection here implied raises a false issue. The New Testament conception of the unity of the Church is that of a unity of life, and not of external organisation. It was a oneness of faith and feeling for which the Saviour prayed, and to which the apostles so frequently exhorted; and a unity such as this is perfectly compatible, as experience shows, with the existence of separate organisations. The seamless robe of Christ is not composed of earthly threads woven in the looms of Rome, or Byzantium, or Canterbury, but is wrought in the hearts of those who truly love the Saviour, and follow Him in the exercises of a regenerated life. The primary and essential mark of our unity with the true spiritual Church of

Jesus Christ is not sacerdotal—not that we are in some mechanical and arbitrary line of ecclesiastical succession—but rather that, in common with all true believers, we have the unity of the Spirit, and love all those who sincerely follow the teaching of Jesus: “By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another.” “The unity of the Church has been manifested in a new and original type of religious life which, notwithstanding local, temporary, and accidental variations, has been the same in all Christian centuries down to our own time. The prayers of the Church, its hymns, its devotional manuals, the sorrows and joys of its saints, are all penetrated by the same spirit, and bear witness to a unity which is unbroken by differences of race, of language, of civilisation, by differences of theological creed, and differences of ecclesiastical connection. The saints of all lands and all generations are akin” (R. W. Dale). This true and most blessed unity is not broken because we find it to be helpful and convenient to work for the great Master on different lines of ecclesiastical arrangement; nor even when we feel called upon, in fidelity to serious conviction, to stand apart, and bear a clear witness against erroneous teaching, or against a hindering and an oppressive Church order. Indeed the very obligations of charity, and heartfelt love of the brethren, and the requirements and obligations of mutual service, which are created by common membership in the Body of Christ, may sometimes lead us to protest with all the energy we possess against errors into which great Churches have been betrayed, and against the superstitions which they have sanctioned. We do not for one moment admit that we are chargeable with the sin of schism because we maintain our separate existence as a Church. Canon Wilberforce says: “Schism, true schism, Godward is the severance of the soul’s trust in Christ; he therefore is a schismatic who cuts himself off from Christ. Manward it is the want of soul-love between members of the same external body, and also the absence of charity between spiritual members of the one Body of Christ, even though not in the same external Community. When we pray in the Church of England Litany against schism, we are

obviously not referring to Dissenters, but to the separating cancers of our own Church, to the malicious religious partisanship so common among ourselves—our being divided into factions under party names with representative newspapers ever stirring up internecine warfare by reviling each other, and heaping contempt on each other's beliefs. I have no reason for shrinking from the admission that when I first came to this town, the bitterest misrepresentations and the severest judgments came upon me, not from Nonconformists, but from those of my own communion. This is schism in the



UNION STREET, OLDHAM.

body ; this is wounding the heart of Christ." Stillingfleet, speaking of the evils of division and of bitter party strife in the same fold, says : " Let us not rend the seamless robe of the Lord Jesus by our undutiful and unseemly divisions." The separate existence of the Methodist New Connexion, as a branch of the Church of Christ, has been, and is still, maintained in no schismatical spirit, nor in any unfriendly rivalry to other religious communities. When we find them casting out devils in the name of Jesus, so far from forbidding them, we rejoice and wish them God-speed ; for they are helping forward the blessed consummation for which we our-

selves are labouring, when "the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ."

Another characteristic which will always mark a true and spiritual Church-life is the love and pursuit of holiness. External unity may exist where there is widespread corruption of both doctrine and manners; but where the members of a Church are striving after a pure and devoted life, and exhibiting in their daily walk the fruit of the Spirit, they will be recognised by all who see them as the followers of Jesus. The great purpose of the Son of God, in His obedience unto death, can be realised only by a consecrated and holy people. "Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it; that He might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the Word; that He might present it to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish." Looking at the lofty and alluring ideal placed before us by the Apostle in these words, we can only say, as a Church, "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect." It is, however, a matter of exceeding thankfulness that the members of the Community, in ever-increasing numbers, are able to claim, with all humility and sincerity, "But one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and looking unto the things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus." The beautiful ideal which stood before the mind of the Apostle when he penned the words above quoted has never yet been realised. Even the apostolic Church, when rejoicing in the strength and fulness of the Pentecostal blessing, did not answer to the lovely picture of spiritual beauty and purity which is there set forth. The inspiring Spirit showed to His servant a Church which was as a bride prepared for her husband—radiant with the softly brilliant jewellery of grace and love. He saw the Church as a prepared habitation of the Holy Spirit; as the unfailing friend of the poor and needy; as heedless of all class distinctions, and knowing neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free; He saw her as the mother of nations, checking the pride of the rich, and abating and withering the envy of the

poor, and nursing into a noble and glorious life a redeemed humanity. As we look at the actual state of things in the Church of Christ viewed in its various branches, we cannot suppress a sigh that the interval between the ideal and the actual should be so great. The Church, alas ! has both spots and wrinkles. She is the destined bride of Christ, and a bride should be fair and fresh : wrinkles belong to old age, and spots to sickness and defect. Very true ; and therefore we conclude that the bride of Christ has not reached the unblemished perfection which it is the purpose of the Bridegroom to give her. Sometimes her beauty is marred by fear—the fear lest the advancing intelligence of the race should rob her of some of her power to impress and save the souls of men. Sometimes her fair face is injured by a touch of pride and haughtiness which chills her sympathy with the poor and the outcast, and makes her too solicitous for the smiles and patronage of the rich and the great. Unhallowed contact with the world-spirit defiles her robes of purity, and stains her righteousness. In these days the current of thought and sentiment runs counter to any form of religious life which is definite and strenuous, and it is increasingly difficult to carry into effect any measures which might separate that which defiles and causes offence. This relaxation of discipline has not been favourable to the development of spiritual strength and impression, and has certainly not made the Church a mightier power for good in the world. The periods in the history of Christianity which have been marked by the grandest victories over sin and error have been periods when the cleavage between the Church and world has been sharpest and most profound. The Church of the Living God is to be the habitation of the Eternal Spirit, and that Holy Presence will not abide in a dwelling which harbours the things which belong to “ the world, the flesh, and the devil.” The mind of the Spirit of truth and purity on this matter is very clear and very solemn, and the Church would grapple the hosts of evil in a much more effective way did she but more closely heed the counsel of the Word of God. Guided by the Spirit of Inspiration an Apostle wrote to an ancient Church “ not to keep company with fornicators : yet not

altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world. But now have I written unto you not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner; with such an one no not to eat. For what have I to do to judge them also that are without? do not ye judge them that are within? But them that are without God judgeth. Therefore put away from yourselves that wicked person." It is a spurious charity, and not the pure and gentle grace wrought in the heart by the Holy Spirit, which palter and parleys with that which soils the fair garments by which the world knows the Church, and thus invites discredit and reproach. A gentle and yet courageous insistence that the members of the visible Church shall be in reasonable accord with the requirements of the Word of God, and a firm adherence to discipline on the part of both ministers and people, would speedily issue in the filling of the Church with such glorious life and strength that she would go forth "clear as the sun, fair as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners." "Wherefore come ye out and be separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." The Methodist New Connexion cannot claim that it has been uninfluenced in these matters by the spirit of the age. In all human organisations and arrangements the lapse of time tends to abate something of the strenuousness and energy which marked their earlier history, and the feeling which animates the administration of our discipline to-day is far less exacting than it was at the beginning of the century. This is probably not altogether an evil; at the same time it must not be overlooked that holiness in the lives of the people who gather in the name of Christ, and stand before the world as the representatives of His person and the advocates of His gospel, is an indispensable note indicating the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit. When the light of purity and consecration becomes dim, and indifference and worldly conformity take the place of a devoted and separated

life, the angel of the Church prepares for flight, and the lamp-bearer will soon be removed out of his place.

Perplexity is sometimes caused to the minds of friends who sincerely love the Community by the smallness of its numbers. After a century of existence it still remains one of the smallest of the tribes of Israel. It often occurs that this circumstance is adduced in proof that the early fathers of the community were mistaken in their teaching and their aims. The argument from numbers, however, is by no means free from peril, and if care is not taken may injure the hand which attempts to wield it. The real catholicity of a Church is not to be determined by the area over which it has spread, nor by the number of people which it has gathered into its fold. If these were the only criteria by which to guide our judgment, we should speedily be led to the conclusion that there is no catholic Church at all. The note of catholicity is to be found in the possession of the one Spirit which divides to every man severally as He will, and in having such methods and Church order as are adapted to the age in which we live. England is a small country and must remain so; but her principles of freedom and constitutional government have created nations greater and mightier than herself, and are at the present time touching and changing by their leavening influence every kingdom on earth. The animating Spirit which dwells in the Methodist New Connexion is the same Spirit of truth and grace which dwells in all faithful Churches of the Lord Jesus Christ, and her principles of ecclesiastical freedom—principles which she first propagated and suffered for—have ministered to the growth of communities greater and more powerful than herself. Those principles have not always—perhaps not often—been definitely and openly avowed by the Churches which have practically adopted them. They have spread their power quietly, and without parade, and the consequence is that our testimony on those matters is no longer like “the voice of one crying in the wilderness.” The community has not always received the credit which is fairly due to it in reference to this question. It has sown, and others have reaped and have come quietly into a heritage for which they did not fight and suffer.

Indeed it is sometimes disputed that it is to the credit of the community that it should have adopted and contended for its principles of ecclesiastical freedom at so early a period in the history of Methodism. It is said that the ideas cherished by the founders of the Body were in advance of the age, and unsuited to its temper and spirit, and that their teaching on matters affecting Church order and government were academic and doctrinaire. In the life of communities and Churches, as well as in the history of nations, freedom and power must not be hastily thrust upon the people; it should rather "broaden down from precedent to precedent." Statements like these are sometimes urged by those who are more than half inclined to think that the founders of the Methodist New Connexion adopted a mistaken policy. But then similar objections may be brought against the action of reformers and pioneers in all ages. The apostles of Jesus Christ were in advance of their times; the noble men who contended against the corruptions of the Romish Church were in advance of their times; the men to whom, under God, we owe our constitutional liberties were in advance of their age: and all these teachers and preachers and reformers paid the penalty of their strenuous beliefs and their unflinching courage. If, however, the mind of man is to develop and grow, and if the Church of Christ is to meet the advancing intelligence of the race, some one must go first, and must take the consequence of being in a very small minority. The men who deal with germinal ideas, and who persist in their endeavour to spread them amongst the people, belong to the same class of workers as "he that goeth forth and weepeth bearing precious seed." And work like that has always tried the temper and mettle of men, and it always will. The Master Himself was as one going forth and bearing precious seed, and very pathetic was His lament when the hearts of the people proved so often like the flinty rock. And how unpropitious the skies and unpromising the soil when the early gospel-sowers went forth to sow! Bitter, biting winds sought to benumb and discourage them, and chilling frosts of persecution attacked the seed almost before the new-made furrows could close over it. And so it has

been through all the history of the Church. The spiritual seedtime of every tribe and nation has been a time of weeping, and the tears of the sower have mingled with the seed he has sown. Indeed Christianity is not alone, though it is pre-eminent in this respect. The germs which produced the Reformation were mingled with tears and fire and blood. The seeds which produced our English liberties were flung from prison windows and from the stake amidst confiscation, and loss, and death. The germs whose fruit was the emancipation of the slaves, both British and American, were borne forth amidst obloquy and opposition, and in America at least had to force their way through soil saturated with blood and heaped with the slain. Under the influence of thoughts like these, the members of our community will find no difficulty in keeping their minds tranquil when they listen to the objection that their fore-elders and founders were men who were in advance of their time, when they met with opposition and obloquy, because they contended earnestly for the principles of ecclesiastical freedom, and for a Church order which should meet the awakening intelligence of the masses of the people. As to the paucity of our numbers, that does not in any way affect the genuineness of our Christian fellowship. True catholicity does not depend on numbers, otherwise we should have to unchurch the company who met together to wait for the Holy Spirit of Pentecost. Those belong to the Catholic Church who have the Spirit of Christ, and live in the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and in brotherly love with all who love the Saviour. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

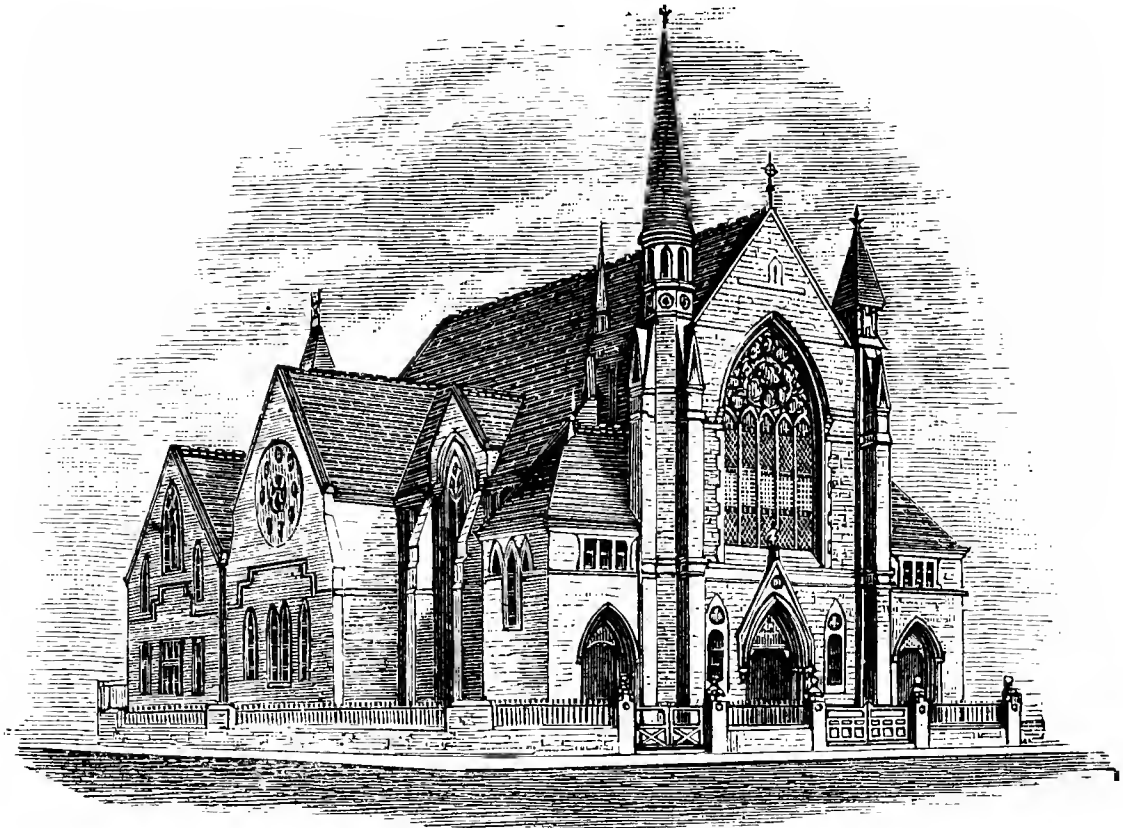
The spiritual life of the community, however, does not root itself in its principles of ecclesiastical order. These principles, when fairly carried out, foster and encourage all the helpful ministries of the Christian life, and therefore promote the growth of the soul in grace. But the life itself is rooted in the spiritual Vine, and draws its nourishment from Christ Himself, through the Eternal Spirit. The fidelity of the community to the doctrinal standards of Methodism, which we hold to be the doctrinal standards of the New

Testament, has exercised an invaluable and an altogether incalculable influence for good on the religious life and experience of our people. Both ministers and people have held firmly to "the faith once for all delivered to the saints." The preaching of the evil wrought by sin, the necessity of repentance towards God, and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, the direct witness of the Holy Spirit, and the necessity of a devoted and sanctified life, led to the revival of the last century, and is needed as much now as then. The Methodist New Connexion has never permitted any serious departure from its doctrinal symbols, and its fidelity to the teaching of the Scripture has told very graciously on the inner and outer life of its members. Not that we claim that our doctrinal formularies are the perfect expressions of all Christian truth. "We would not be understood to hold our creed as a perfect ecclesiastical fortification, or even as a complete statement of theological truth. Revelation like nature is larger than our largest knowledge of it, and whenever one finishes his system of thought, and closes up all its definitions, he is sure to have left some truth out. We would leave at least, on every side of our spiritual heritage, gates open into the undiscovered country—those realms of light and life which stretch beyond our present horizons : but while we would not shut ourselves in dogmatic exclusiveness—while we would keep the window open for any ray of light to stream in, or for any birds of passage to pour in upon us their songs from the skies—we rejoice that we are not left by the God of the Bible without shelter and houseless, to wander in orphanage of spirit without country or home. These are truths old and familiar, at whose friendly hearth we have learned to rest and to wait ; there are some faiths tried and sure, in which, as our fathers did before us, we can live and would die" (Newman Smyth).

The doctrinal teaching which we find in the Word of God has never been regarded as mainly a matter of intellectual apprehension ; its chief relation has always been to the life and experience of the people. In the earlier years of our history it is very likely that the ministry laid greater emphasis on what is called doctrinal teaching, than is done at the

present day ; that is, the ministrations of the pulpit were thrown into more definite and dogmatic forms. There are two things, however, which must not be overlooked in relation to this matter, namely, first, that in those days the masses of the people were lamentably ignorant of definite Biblical truth, and had very imperfect conceptions of the great doctrines which pertain to personal salvation. There was, therefore, the most urgent necessity to impart simple and elementary dogmatic instruction in the fundamental principles which are involved in the rescue of the soul from sin and ruin. Another thing which is very worthy of note in relation to this matter is, that the doctrinal teaching and preaching of the early ministers, were so suffused with Divine unction, and so accompanied by the demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that striking, not to say astonishing, results followed, and people in hundreds and thousands were added to the Church. Present-day preaching is not so dogmatic, nor so definitely doctrinal, at any rate in its form. Those doctrines of grace which Methodism in particular has always felt called upon to emphasise are the commonplaces of evangelical thought to-day, and as a consequence the ministry has been drawn in the direction of ethical rather than of doctrinal preaching. It is doubtful, however, whether the change has been altogether a beneficent one. In the extent to which this tendency has carried some teachers and preachers, there has been assuredly peril and loss. A false issue has been raised, and an antithesis placed where really none existed. It is a mistake to suppose that there is any antithesis between the doctrinal and the ethical in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. They are as inseparably related to each other as the root is to the branches, and there can be no genuine ethical teaching or life which does not spring from some adequate conception of the doctrines of the Cross, and a true and earnest faith in them. The Reformation of the sixteenth century sprang very largely from the preaching of the great doctrine of Justification by Faith. Neither Martin Luther, nor his teachers, nor associates, invented that doctrine ; they simply, under the guidance, and doubtless the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, cleared away the rubbish

of superstition and falsity which the Romish Church had cast upon it, and brought into light what was clearly the mind of the Spirit, and the teaching of the Divine Word. It is, however, very impressive and very instructive to notice the marvellous transformation which took place in the mind and life of those countries where the great truth of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ was preached. Scarcely less wonderful were the issues which followed on the clear and heartfelt apprehension of the same great truth and doctrine by Whitefield



CHRIST CHURCH, BARROW-IN-FURNESS.

and the Wesleys and their coadjutors. They found England spiritually asleep—chilled and frozen and numbed by rationalistic theology and spiritual indifference. The great mass of the working classes were in a state of hopeless ignorance and embruting toil, and their lives were unrelieved by anything which would bring nobler thoughts and aspirations. But in His mercy the Eternal Spirit sent forth the Wesleys and their devoted helpers through the length and breadth of the land, preaching the tidings of present salvation by faith

in Jesus Christ, and it was as though the people had heard some mystic voice calling them to hope and life and joy. Enslaved by their sin, and groaning under unfriendly and oppressive social conditions, there seemed to be no possibility of rescue, and there was certainly no conception of the bright and happy experiences which their Saviour and Lord meant them to enjoy. But when they heard and understood that their sin could be repented of and forsaken; that through faith in Christ they might rejoice in the favour of God; that they might have in themselves the abiding assurance that they were the children of God; that through the sanctification of the Holy Ghost they might walk in newness of life, and their whole thought and feeling and experience be touched and purified and illuminated by the abiding presence of the Living Christ;—when the masses of the people heard and understood all this, there is no wonder that they should spring forward in thousands and tens of thousands as though they had heard the trumpet of the resurrection. The definite and dogmatic preaching of the doctrines of grace changed the face of England and saved the country from the horror and carnage of those revolutionary forces which had already begun to work and seethe in the minds of the people, and had wrought such immeasurable mischief and massacres in France. The Methodist revival of the eighteenth century was like the opening of living springs in the moral and spiritual wastes of the land, and wherever the healing waters came the wilderness and the solitary place were glad for them, and the desert rejoiced and blossomed as the rose.

Methodism does not and cannot claim to have any monopoly of those doctrines of grace which have an inseparable connection with salvation and spiritual experience. There sounds out, thank God! from ten thousand pulpits in our land other than Methodist, a clear and definite message proclaiming “repentance towards God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ,” and the sanctification of the heart and life by the indwelling of the Holy Ghost. But undoubtedly it was given to Methodism to be the pioneer and leader in the great spiritual revival which, during the last one hundred and fifty years, has influenced for good the moral and social life of

the nation. The practical answer, as has been well said which Providence gave to rationalism was Moravianism and Methodism. Through the preaching of the doctrines of the Cross—the redemption of the world by Jesus Christ—souls became filled with a new and nobler sense of God, and aglow with the inshining of the Eternal Spirit. The annunciation of these doctrines is an indispensable condition of successful evangelisation to-day. Our ministry does not forget this doctrinally we stand mainly where our fathers stood, and hold, with no trembling or careless grasp, the truths and the “form of sound words” which proved, in their hands “mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.” Indeed it seems hardly just to use the qualifying word mainly and the only reason for its retention is that it may express some slight difference in the handling of the old symbols of the faith once delivered to the saints. Changing times and different habits of thought necessitate some alteration in the method of stating and applying the doctrines of Holy Writ and the free and unhindered action of the Spirit on the minds of those who teach the truth will undoubtedly inspire the accent which is needed by the spiritual conditions of the present age. At the same time it must be imperatively and categorically said that the doctrinal position we hold to-day is that of the fathers of the community, because we believe that the truths they taught express the mind of the Spirit as revealed in the Word of God. This position of fidelity to the teachings of Holy Writ has not been maintained through the century of our existence without some stress and strain. There have been times when the devotion and generosity of our members have been tested with great severity, and when the community has been thrown not only into serious agitation, but also into peril, by the unfaithfulness of some of its ministers to the truth which they were ordained and sent forth to teach and preach. But the faithful ones girded on the armour and contended long and earnestly for the truth of God, and by His help saved the Church of their fathers from wreck and disaster. All through her history the Methodist New Connexion has never lacked a goodly company of adherents who have shown an unflinching

loyalty to her principles and institutions, and have been like "a tower which stood four-square to every wind that blew." And as the century closes our hearts glow with gratitude and love and hope as we look upon our ministry, and there abides in our minds the conviction that it is behind no body of Christian teachers and preachers in its fidelity to evangelical truth and to those doctrines which it has been the special mission of Methodism to emphasise and enforce.

Let it be understood also that the claim we make on behalf of the ministry of the community holds equally good with respect to the membership generally. The loyalty shown by our people to the teaching and exposition of the gospel by their pastors, and to the doctrinal standards of the Church, is most helpful and encouraging. It is true that the heresy-hunting spirit, if not quite dead amongst us, has become very decrepit and infirm. We do not now harass our members because their intellectual conceptions of the symbols of truth do not happen always to fall into accord with what may seem best to us, being assured that if a sincere and earnest soul is seeking to know and love the truth, gentle and patient treatment will issue in complete emancipation from doubt and fear, and that the truth which saves and sanctifies, and which guides and ennobles the life, is the fruit, not of controversy and logic, but of prayers and penitence and humble trust in God. "Let us, therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded : and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you." Whilst, however, our people hold with a firm and intelligent grasp "the faith once for all delivered to the saints," they do not expend their energy in giving logical definitions of doctrine, or in contending for theological formulas : they worship Christ and walk in the joyful consciousness of His redeeming love. One of the favourite catchwords of the present day is "Back to Christ" ; and our people are in full sympathy with the cry ; but it is a reasoned and intelligent sympathy. No theological creed, or formula, or Church order, or ecclesiastical arrangement, is to be put before the Living Christ. It is His name we bear, and at His feet we bow, and in His redeeming work on the cross that we trust. "Back to Christ" in many cases

means that the people are to go to Christ's words as recorded in the gospel, and treat as a negligible quantity the teachings of His apostles. What is the simple truth is overlooked or ignored, that "no Church ever existed upon the basis of Christ's words only" The Church was founded by the ministry of the apostles ; and it was founded not upon what Christ had said, but upon Christ Himself, His life and works, and in an eminent degree His death and resurrection. The testimony of the great Apostle Paul was, "I delivered unto you first of all that which also I received ; how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried ; and that He had been raised again the third day, according to the Scriptures." And a similar message to this was borne by the other inspired teachers and evangelists. "The Church needs to be on her guard, not only against the assaults of her enemies, but against the unreflecting zeal of some who would really befriend her ; and her hope lies in apprehending the apostolic gospel. Nothing else is the gospel known to history, the gospel which actually came forth as a saving power into the world of men and events, and which in all ages since the beginning has proved its claims by success in the work of evangelising. Nothing else --not even the teaching of Jesus Himself--is the gospel of Christ. To borrow the happy expression of Dr. Dale, 'Christ came not to preach the gospel ; He came that there might be a gospel to preach'" (W. R. Nichol). We must not, therefore, listen to any cry in such way as to suffer ourselves to be led behind Pentecost. In a very important sense that was the birthday of the Church of Christ, and it is by the perpetual renewal of the glorious baptism which then fell upon the disciples and followers of the Master that her life and power are to be maintained. In this fellowship of the Holy Ghost, and in the acceptance of the facts and truths with which that fellowship is indissolubly bound, the spiritual life of the Community has grown, and continues to abide.

The natural and inevitable result of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the believer is spiritual fruitfulness. No Church can keep alive by merely attempting to hold its own ; it is the inexorable law of its life that it shall win men to the

obedience of the faith. "Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit He taketh away" Decay and death will assuredly overtake any Christian community which contents itself with a quiet and orderly Church-life, seeking to enjoy its sacraments and ordinances, but neglecting to make strenuous endeavour for the evangelisation of the people. The Methodist New Connexion has not been unmindful of these truths and principles, but has sought in many ways to glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ by seeking the salvation of men and spreading scriptural holiness through the land. The testimony borne by the community in favour of a free and elastic Church order and polity has been already referred to. That testimony may possibly have been the immediate cause of its coming into existence as a distinct Church; but it has been by no means its primary aim. When the great harvest-time of the world comes it will be found, we humbly trust, that its labours on behalf of the young, its Home Mission enterprises, and its self-sacrificing efforts to give the gospel to the heathen, will have brought some worthy fruitage to the honour and glory of the Redeemer. Its Sunday Schools have trained tens of thousands of young people in the fear of the Lord, and sent a goodly number to work for Christ and humanity in this and other lands, both in connection with its own institutions and also those of other religious communities. The cause of Temperance has always found in the Body an earnest and useful advocate, and the recent movement called the "Young People's Society of Christian Endeavour" has also been received with cordial appreciation and sympathy. It has been definitely incorporated into our methods of Church-life and work, and in many places is proving itself to be a gentle step by which numbers of young people are passing into the fellowship of the Church. The missionary work of the community also presents a very honourable record. For many years it sent over its agents into Canada to labour amidst the scattered and sparse population of that vast territory, and was the means of ministering to the spiritual needs of large numbers of people who otherwise would have been left without a gospel ministry. Under the arduous

and self-denying labours of the men sent out, a strong and vigorous Church sprang into existence, which ultimately joined the movement for union so auspiciously consummated some years ago in the formation of the Methodist Church of Canada. Throughout the whole of its history the Connexion has rendered help in the work of evangelisation in Ireland, and still continues its work in that country ; and though its numbers there are small, not a few precious souls have been won from evil and sin, and will be as jewels in the diadem of the Redeemer. The missionary work which the community has carried on in China for over thirty years has a history which, in some of its details and successes, reads like a romance. Impelled by a spirit of love and loyalty to Christ, the Connexion has sustained that enterprise amidst difficulties and discouragements, and humbly believes that it has rendered some definite and appreciable help in the great work of the evangelisation of that vast empire. Then, again, in all the movements which seek the better education of the masses of the people ; the arrest of the war-spirit, and the promotion of peace and arbitration ; the guarding of the sanctity of the Sabbath ; the abatement of the evils of gambling and betting, and the uplifting of the social and family life of the people, the Methodist New Connexion has never spoken in slow and halting accents, but has been prompt and faithful and courageous.

As we pass the boundary-line of the first century of our existence as a distinct community, and think of the stir and energy and progress which will assuredly mark the future of the race, we may well pause for a moment and ask, What are our purposes, our aims, our ambitions as a community ? Our witness to the rights of the laity in the government of the Church will not be forgotten. But there is less need of that testimony to-day than at any period in the past, and as other Churches continue to travel on the same lines as ourselves the need will diminish still more and more as time advances. Bearing such testimony is therefore likely to be a matter whose importance will recede until it reaches the vanishing point, and whose principal interest will be for the student and the historian. Our principal aims look, therefore,

to more vital and enduring issues. Above and beyond all other objects which awaken our desire and hope is the glory of the Redeemer in the regeneration of the race—the bringing in of the kingdom of peace and truth and righteousness. Our hearts hunger for the uplifting of the fallen and the salvation of the lost. We believe that the true life of the people is one of devotion to the Saviour who has redeemed them, working out its gracious and beneficent purposes and its helpful and healing ministries of mutual oversight and fellowship. The Methodist New Connexion is a Church, and a Church is a congregation of people gathered out of the world and associating themselves together in the name of Christ, to honour and serve Him. Humanity cannot do without the Church ; isolated and individual activities have their place and value ; but if the Church, as a corporate institution, is scattered and broken, the corner-stone of all that is noble and healing will be moved out of its place. “ Balzac, who, whatever else may be said of him, is assuredly the greatest of Christian novelists, by far the most profound interpreter of that mystery of expiation and redemption which is at the heart of Christianity, has somewhere a picture of the Church of Christ marching side by side with humanity, consoling and sustaining her. What, he asks, if her great companion were to sink down on the road and die, leaving humanity to go on her forlorn and helpless way ? Everything would have vanished then which now holds us to hope and duty ” There are many people, alas ! even in Christian congregations, who set all too lightly by the duty and privilege of Church membership. This Christian land shows the spectacle of many Churches doing the work of the Master in various ways, and speaking for Him in different though not necessarily dissonant tones ; and the people are often taught that they may associate themselves with one or other, according to their taste or preference. But in too many cases they have gone a step beyond this, and concluded to stand aloof from all Church-life and associate themselves with none. Now it is a question of very serious, not to say supreme, moment as to whether any one can remain a member of the Body of Christ who wilfully cuts himself off

from the "house of God, which is the Church of the Living God, the pillar and ground of truth." Listen to the words of one who has deeply pondered this great and important matter : "A man is saved, not as a unit, but as a member of a community. It was the race that Christ redeemed, and souls are members of it. And He redeemed men into a kingdom whose grace the



ST. PAUL'S, LEICESTER.

units can but share, and whose covenant they can but inherit. The very act of faith in Christ places a man by its ideal nature in a community of believers, which he must serve else his faith decays. No man can fully believe in Christ who refuses association with some Christian community. There are no unattached Christians in the Christian idea. The act of faith is not the act of an atom, but of a social unit. Faith

is not the act of an atom to an atom. It is not the act of a lone individual towards another lone individual, however great and good. That way lies the leanest Socinianism. It is the act of a social unit towards One who is the unity of His society, who is much more than an individual at the end of a chain, or at the centre of a group of believing individuals. Christ is no mere unit in saving, and by faith in Him we can be no mere units in being saved. He is first the member of a manifold and social Godhead—the Trinity ; and is second, the life, soul, and spirit of a varied and social kingdom which is knit by spiritual relations, and in which a lone individual would be like a grit in a watch. Faith in such a Saviour cannot be atomic, however personal. It excludes the individualism of the individual. By its very nature it disowns the man who disowns Christian relations with men in Christ. It is the act of an individual who in the act ceases to be a mere individual, and who, like a cell of the body, dies when isolated from the organism which is its life " (Dr. Forsyth). The present-day pleadings for brotherhood and unity fall exactly into chime with the spirit and genius of the Methodist New Connexion, and will always receive a ready and cordial response from its members. But that response is intelligent and discriminative because scriptural. The brotherhood of the Church is not the brotherhood of man or of the race, nor merely the brotherhood of the benefactors of man—it is the brotherhood of believers. We have sought to promote the fellowship of those who have been not simply the adherents of the Master, but of those who have been devoted to His person, and the living members of His Body. The Connexion has always fostered the definite Churchmanship of its members, and has never been content until its children and adherents have come into clear and open fellowship with its communion. In consequence of this, and also, perhaps, in some measure in consequence of the smallness of its numbers, there has grown up in the Community what has been called a domestic feeling—a certain spirit of the family—which has knit the hearts of its people together in genuine sympathy, and often even in tender affection. Methodist New Connexion people throughout the length and breadth of the land,

and even in distant countries, know each other in a way that is special and peculiar, very much resembling the intimacies of family life. This sentiment is felt by many of our people to be very precious to them, and they will be very jealous of anything which might weaken its hold. Nevertheless the community is at the utmost distance from claiming to be the one Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, or of unchurching those who may prefer the worship and ministry of other communions. It simply throws in its claim to be considered part of the Church founded by the Saviour, and wishes to live in love and fellowship with all who truly serve Him. There is but one Shepherd, and in truth but one flock ; but there may be and are many folds of varying construction and different methods of pastoral oversight and order, and the aim of all who do truly love and honour the Master is to gather into the folds the wandering and perishing children of men, so that the flock of the Good Shepherd may be commensurate with redeemed humanity : "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold : them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice ; and they shall become one flock, one Shepherd."

As the community is in all respects a true Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, it seeks to make all needful provision for the development and training of its members in a holy and useful spiritual life. In its sanctuaries there is orderly and comforting and instructive worship ; in its schools there are arrangements and appliances and agencies for the training of the young ; and it insists on prayer and fellowship and the breaking of bread as the conditions of its membership. In the earlier part of the century the modes of worship adopted in most of our chapels were characterised by a plain, not to say bald and uninteresting style. The "Nonconformist conscience" was treated with all deference and respect, but very little attention was paid to the "Nonconformist imagination." As, however, education and culture have spread their humanising and refining influence, and the love of beauty and order has developed, a vague yearning has grown up, in the hearts of the young especially, for a more ornate and æsthetic form of worship. It may be that this very gradual but also

very real change in the tastes and habits of the later generations of Methodist people, has not been sufficiently taken into account. Modes of procedure which had become tame and bald have been clung to by some of the elder people with too great tenacity, and many of the young people have been allowed to drift elsewhere without due consideration of the changes which have been rendered necessary and appropriate by the advance which has taken place in their intelligence and culture. The consequence has been that the venerable and stately ritual and worship of the Establishment has fascinated and drawn away from us multitudes of those who ought to have been our stay and strength and joy. The Church arrangements of the Methodist New Connexion, however, do not hinder, but rather encourage and help, any change which may minister to the comfort and spiritual devotion of its people whether young or old, and in many places more tasteful and ornate services meet that rapidly growing section of opinion which has been shaped by the increasing educational advantages of the present day. At the same time there are some necessary cautions in relation to this matter which must not be lost sight of. The imagination may be touched by the strains of sweet and solemn music, by stately architecture, and by the subdued radiance streaming from

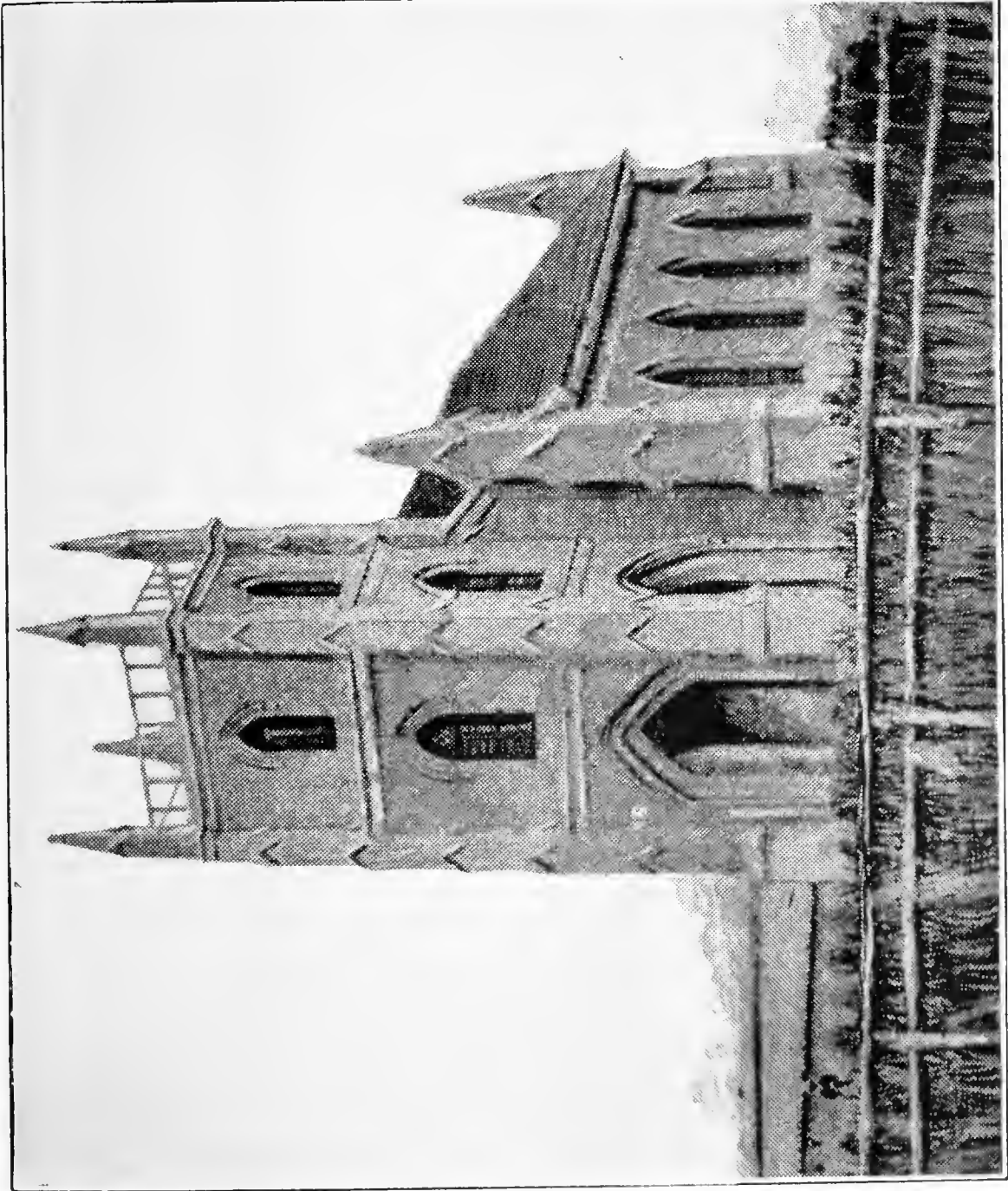
“Storied windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light,”

where there is not one atom of true spiritual impression and devotion. The whole affair may be a matter of sensibility and taste and imagination, and the heart all the time remain uncleansed, and the will untouched, and the life destitute of saving grace. Let the words of one who had gone through very definite experiences in relation to this subject bear its lesson to our hearts. “Feelings even rapturously devotional may have been kindled, and the soul as it were borne upwards into regions purely spiritual, whilst yet the heart was estranged from God, and unreservedly yielded to His enemies—to the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life. I frequently recall, with no small bewilder-

ment of mind, the emotion excited within the walls of an edifice with which many a melting recollection is closely interwoven. Often do I in imagination again pace its majestic aisles, as was my wont in childhood and early youth, bending many an awestruck look on its embowered roof, admiring its storied windows, the broad dark depth of purple, crimson, and all those mellow colours through which the daybeam struggled to look upon the antique tracery of richly-carved stalls; the massive effigies, recumbent on their sculptured tombs, where generations of living men had approached to gaze and wonder, and had retired to perish, making way for a succeeding race, who should in turn behold and depart and die even as they. It was on such occasions that I was rapt into something so nearly resembling the fervour of true piety, as to yield a clue to the otherwise inexplicable power of those delusions which blind the devotees of the Romish Church. The impulse was certainly from without and around—not from within and above. Nothing can be more beautifully harmonious than twilight shadows, and the interior of antique buildings, massive and richly sculptured. Even the fading of those gorgeous tints on its Gothic windows seemed to speak something of the fashion of this world passing away; and when the deep slow tones of the majestic organ, touched by a master's hand, melting as they seemed to mount, and finally lost amidst the recesses of the lofty roof—when the succeeding stillness was broken by a single voice reading, perhaps in the lesson of the day, some exquisitely sublime passage from Isaiah—when the dark blue lining of my cushioned and curtained recess has assumed the semblance of a funeral canopy, and a dim unearthly character has rested on all around me—my feelings have so largely partaken of that character as to impress me with the confident belief that I was holding high and full communion with Him whom I neither loved nor feared nor desired to know beyond the fictitious excitement of such moments” (Charlotte Elizabeth). Along the same line, but uttering a still sterner warning, are the vigorous words of F. W. Robertson: “Devotional feelings are very different from uprightness and purity of life—they are often singularly allied to the animal nature, the

result of a warm temperament—guides to hell under the form of angels of light, conducting the unconscious victim of feelings which appear Divine and seraphic, into a state of heart and life at which the very world stands aghast. Cases of this kind came under my immediate cognisance, and disgusted me—made me suspect feelings which I had hitherto regarded as the holiest, and produced a reaction. Nevertheless the only use of such a discovery is this—that our basest feelings lie very near our highest, and that they pass into one another by insensible transitions.” The lesson comes to us, therefore, that the utmost care is needed in yielding to the prevalent desire for a more æsthetic and tasteful form of worship, that the form shall not become a veil which hides from the soul the solemn and everlasting realities of truth and righteousness. There must always be the submission of the will to Christ, and the daily consecration of the life to those holy ministries which glorify His name and save the souls of men. Very often when young people fall away from the faith and worship of their Nonconformist forefathers it will be found that there has been some laxity in their religious training, and in the home-life there has not been that strict adherence to the principles and requirements of a sturdy and self-denying piety which ought always to characterise the families of Christian people. The impatience of control and authority which is so marked a feature of the social life of the present time has had an unfriendly influence over all Churches, and parents have too readily yielded to the spirit of the age, instead of standing firmly by the teachings and principles of God’s Holy Word. If the words spoken of Abraham by the Almighty could be truly said of the heads of households in the Church of Christ now, the issue would doubtless be on the whole, and perhaps with a nearer approach to universality than we are sometimes disposed to think, a seed to serve Him and a generation calling Him blessed: “For I know him, that he will command his children and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord to do justice and judgment.” The Church of Christ ought to be a place where families, as families, can be trained and nurtured in the principles of righteousness and reverence, and in the

love and fear of God. That nation will be strong, and great and noble, aye, and invincible, whose roots are fed and nourished by a family life which acknowledges the Masterhood of the Living Christ, and in its orderings and arrangements seeks to honour Him. Wide and accurate observation of life will show to the thoughtful mind that there is no need to explain away the Word of the Lord—"Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The attainment of the ideal here put before us receives very definite help and encouragement by the arrangements made in our sanctuaries for families being together in the exercises of worship. Notwithstanding all that is said against what is called the "pew system," there are advantages connected with it which would be irreparably lost if it were abolished. Free and open churches, no doubt, present certain attractions, and on the surface seem to accord with the preaching of a free and open salvation. "Let men come," it is said, "without let or hindrance, and without any suggestion of class distinction, into the house of prayer, and hear the message of mercy, and worship the Maker of heaven and earth." Very good; and by all means take away all "let and hindrance," and give to every one who comes the friendly welcome which always springs from the indwelling of the Spirit of the Master. Nevertheless there are benefits which are simply incalculable arising from the association of families in the place of worship. Now these matters are not overlooked by us as a Community, and in very many places free and open provision is made for those who desire it, and at the same time the heads of families are encouraged to have a "name and a place" in the sanctuary, whither they may take the children committed to their trust, and with them bow before the Lord their God. It is impossible for parents to attach too much importance to the regular attendance of themselves and their households at the house of prayer, and no pains should be spared in the endeavour to cultivate the habit of weekly worship. By these means the character is slowly but surely developed along the lines of a reverent piety, and the whole of the future destiny influenced for good.



TIEN-TSIN, CHINA.

Similar aims animate us in the endeavours put forth in connection with our various Sunday Schools. The facilities afforded at the present day for both primary and secondary education have had an unfriendly influence in some directions, and there are many parents who are less careful about sending their children to Sunday School than was the case some years ago. In those times large numbers of the children of the poorer people would have grown up absolutely destitute of the simplest elements of primary education, and would have been unable to either read or write, had it not been for the training they received in the Sunday School. Things are different now in these respects, and the youth of the country as a whole are required to show that they have received some elementary education. The mistake, alas ! which many parents make is, that they think there is no longer any great need for the training and instructions of the Sunday School. The need is really as great—we need hardly hesitate to say greater—than ever. Indeed the completer the intellectual equipment of the young people, the more urgent the importance of their minds being furnished with a guiding and steady principle, which will enable them to use their acquirements for the good of themselves and of society. And here it is that we see the priceless value of those pious and devoted Christians who sacrifice their leisure and their ease, that by their prayers and their examples and their teaching they may touch the minds of the young people to the finer issues of spiritual life and consecration. Through want of due consideration the fact does not strike our imagination as it should, that there are thousands and tens of thousands of Christian people, both young and old, engaged week after week, without earthly fee or reward, amidst many discouragements, seeking to bring the children of our Churches into direct and personal relations with Him who is the Shepherd and Bishop of souls. Their labour is not in vain ; the record of it is written in the Book of Remembrance, and the day will declare it. And even here and now these devoted and God-fearing workers are not left without proof that the seed of the kingdom, which is sometimes sown with aching hearts and tearful faces, does not perish. Some of the brightest

names on the roll of our denominational history received their first influential religious impressions in the Sunday School, and many of those who are now engaged in successful Christian work were started on the lines of their holy activity through their association with its organisation.

The experience we have gained during the century of our existence serves to strengthen our confidence in the adaptation of the means of grace and the methods of Christian enterprise, which are especially emphasised in the Methodist Churches, to the growing needs of the people. The necessity for the preaching of the simple gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ is as urgent now as it was two thousand years ago. There is no possible cleansing for human sin except by the blood of the Cross ; there is no renewal of the human heart except by the energy of the Holy Spirit ; the conscience is restless and apprehensive unless assured of that justifying grace which brings the peace of God into the soul ; the illimitable cravings of the spirit of man can find no possible satisfaction until it receives the inward witness of the abiding, indwelling Christ ; the soul can give no truce to its forebodings and agitations amidst the toil and trouble and disappointments of this earthly life, until it accepts and rests with utter confidence in the word, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed upon Thee, because he trusteth in Thee." The message we take with us into the coming years is essentially the same as the one which has awakened, and admonished, and cheered, and saved, and sanctified the souls of thousands and tens of thousands in the past. We gladly accept all the help which the culture and intelligence of the advancing years may give to us ; we will keep step, as far as may be, with all progressive ideas which are in accord with the Word of God, and which will contribute to the moral and mental elevation of the people ; but we will not cease to remember that no superstructure, however beautiful and attractive, can endure unless placed upon a secure foundation. Hours of storm and stress and trial will be sure to come, and only the work of those builders will abide which has been placed upon the Rock. Whatever excellences of character people may have, and however amiable

their natural disposition, and however much they may help in the movements of the Church, there is only one true and safe way into the kingdom: "Ye must be born again." Unless there be the definite acceptance of Christ as a personal Saviour, those regenerative and sanctifying processes which fit the soul for the vision of God cannot even commence. In the case of those young people who have been trained amidst gracious influences, and of others who have been led gradually, and almost imperceptibly, into the assurance of salvation and the hope of eternal life, there must be some point in the spiritual history when the will goes over definitely to the side of Christ, and accepts the gift of eternal life through faith in His precious blood. The time of this most blessed decision cannot always be traced as a matter of mental history, and sometimes this inability has been a cause of anxious thought. The anxiety is needless: "There are diversities of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all." The one question to settle is, Does the soul just now rest all its interests, for time and for eternity, on the loving Redeemer, and, without afterthought or reserve, trust itself to the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world? Wherever this faith is in exercise the living seed of the kingdom is implanted in the heart, and in due time will spring forth, "first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear." On this matter of personal decision for Christ and a change of heart we can make no alteration in the message we deliver. Changing times and advancing culture and intelligence cannot alter the essential requirements of the gospel of Christ; and it is as true to-day as it was when the word was sent to the Roman Church by the Apostle Paul that, "Being justified by faith we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Modification in the outward expression and manifestation of spiritual feeling is to be expected where people become better educated; but at the root of the nature the same great moral transformation must be effectuated before entrance can be gained into the kingdom of heaven. Sometimes Methodism has been reproached with extravagance because its teachers and preachers have sought to produce immediate impression and decision, and to awaken

the soul to the danger of delay in yielding to the strivings of the Spirit of God ; it is to be feared that there is all too little ground for the reproach to-day ! It was the enthusiasm for souls possessed by the early preachers which led them to speak so definitely and with such persistent reiteration to enforce the truths which relate to personal salvation, that led to the wonderful awakening of the eighteenth century ; and had it not been for the spiritual fervours called into play, the great Methodist revival could not have been sustained. Witty ecclesiastics and clever reviewers might sneer at the emotional manifestations which marked the progress of the gracious work ; but those very fervours were the conditions used by the Eternal Spirit for the accomplishment of His blessed purposes. " It did not occur to Sydney Smith and the *Edinburgh Review* that but for the spiritual conditions at which they mocked Christianity could never have been founded, the world could never have been converted, the faith could never among persecutions and distresses have been preserved. Assuredly 'rational' Christians could neither have originated nor perpetuated a law and a creed. As in the earth's centre, so in the core of every vital religion lives a fire of emotion which will break the crust of decent routine, and will excite the terror or the laughter of the 'rational.' Yet without this fire there could be no spiritual life, and without its volcanic outbursts there would be none of life's cleansing and renewal" (A. Lang). What we need to watch with unremitting care is that, whilst for many reasons there may be an abatement of the "volcanic outbursts" of spiritual feeling, there shall be persistent longing and unfailing prayer for the convincing and purifying influence of the Holy Spirit, without which the human heart must remain the slave of guilt and sin. The primary note of our ministry to-day, therefore, is as of old, "Repent and believe the gospel ;" for, "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins : and by Him all who believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

It is a matter of profound satisfaction to every well-wisher

of the community that at the close of the first century of our existence the doctrines of grace should be sounded out with so clear a note. Probably at no period in our history have our ministers placed before the people the importance of completely occupying the "goodly heritage" which is provided for the soul in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ than is being done at the present time. Martin Luther said that the doctrine of Justification by Faith was the note of a rising or a falling Church—if that doctrine was preached clearly and simply the Church would rise in its strength and overthrow the hosts of sin and hell; if that doctrine was hidden or allowed to recede into the background spiritual decay and corruption would follow. And the history of Christianity shows how large an element of truth there was in the contention. It is no less true that the doctrine of holiness is the mark of a progressive and victorious Church. John Wesley asked his preachers to bring the subject of complete consecration and sanctification frequently before the people to whom they ministered; and where that was done with scriptural fidelity and clearness the most blessed results followed. The Holy Spirit used the completer exhibition of the "truth as in Jesus" to awaken in the hearts of those who heard feelings of unspeakable longing for "a closer walk with God," and for that happy and victorious experience which it is the privilege of every believer to enjoy. The deepest needs of the human heart are the same all through the ages; whatever satisfactions are provided for it, no true rest can be its portion until it goes back to God in complete self-surrender, and makes the word of the Psalmist its own, "Thou art my portion, O Lord." Thank God, the attention of our people is being called to the importance and necessity of realising in their experience "the fulness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ." The extent and grandeur of their birthright in the Eternal Spirit is held before them in ways so alluring and impressive that a feeling of burning desire is being kindled in many hearts which says in effect, Deliver me, O mighty Spirit of Holiness, from this crippling weakness which harasses and betrays me! Lift me out of this poor and unsatisfactory existence! Give! O give me

power to walk in the beautiful paths of righteousness, and help me to live the life which seems to me so pure, and precious, and blessed, and victorious! Feelings and desires like these have been quickened in the hearts of our people by the wonderful outburst of generous enthusiasm which has marked the celebration of the Centenary. Great things are being attempted, and great things are being done, to relieve the Churches from financial embarrassment, and to prepare the way for the more successful prosecution of Christian enterprises; but the thought of our people looks to something beyond, and to something of far greater importance than the most generous gifts; it is looking for an abundant outpouring of the Holy Spirit that souls may be saved, and that believers may be brought into fellowship with God so close and blessed that sin shall be shorn of all its power, and that sighs of discouragement shall be lost amidst the happy songs of a conquering experience. In many places the gracious Saviour is sending the foregleams of a brighter day, and many are longing to "walk in the light as He is in the light," and not a few are rejoicing in the spiritual assurance that "the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." The preaching of the simple gospel of Jesus Christ is awakening a deeper interest in spiritual things, and a more definite and assured conviction that there is no resting-place for the human spirit except in humility, and in adoring meditation on God in Christ, and in the utter submission of the will to Him, and in glad and prompt obedience to His Holy Word. We are endeavouring to show the people that "the hope of His calling" is something far grander than deliverance from the guilt and punishment of sin, and the soul's admission to heaven when it passes from the world: something more than the pardon of our sins, and the assurance that God will not cast us off for our apathy and indifference and worldliness. The goal to which the great and precious promises of Holy Writ point us is something very much higher and nobler than this. The salvation put before the soul in the Word of God is the complete destruction of the works of the devil. The "hope of His calling" contemplates entire victory over sin: "Likewise reckon ye your-

selves to be dead indeed unto sin, and alive unto God through our Lord Jesus Christ." It comprehends a new and blessed life of hope, and trust, and rest : the power that raised up Jesus Christ from the dead works now and here in the hearts of His people, and they are quickened together with Him. Moreover, this power of the blessed life does not work faintly and feebly, but mightily and with ever-increasing force. The Word is, "the exceeding greatness of His power to us-ward strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man." The Christian life held before us by the Spirit of Inspiration does not proceed on the expectation of defeat and failure and ever-recurring lapses, but on the assurance that sin is a conquered foe, and that this foe is not conquered by us, but by the Living Christ through the Eternal Spirit dwelling in the hearts of them that believe. It is He who grants us "to be strengthened with all might," and thus leads the soul to the grand doxology, so full of strength and hope for poor helpless sinners : "Now unto Him who is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, unto Him be glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, world without end. Amen." This is our supreme aim and purpose as a community : we are seeking to be co-workers with the Spirit of Christ in gathering into the Church "a people for His own possession," so that He may see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied. The precious truths which relate to the deeper experiences of the Divine life have not been hidden from the people during the past century of our existence : "their sound has gone out," and through the ministry of His servants God has called many thousands to the full enjoyment of their inheritance in Christ. Alas ! other voices have too often caught their ears, and lower interests have drawn their hearts away. God has spoken to His people once, and again and again, telling them that all they have ever dreamed of or heard of in the blessed life of complete victory over sin—"above all that we ask or think"—should be theirs if they would but seek it with all their hearts. Once and again the tender light of a holier life has shed its alluring glow over our souls ; once and again the unutterable desire has sprung

up within us, filling us with an eager hunger and thirst after righteousness. But alas! we have too often suffered the tones of that loving voice to die away without receiving any adequate response. Too often we have failed rightly to interpret the inward call of the Divine Spirit when He has sent His holy pleadings through our hearts, and sometimes, it may be, declined the high vocation which He has placed before us. Nevertheless His mercy endureth forever, and peradventure the soft, low tones of the everlasting wind are even now breathing over the valley of dry bones and a renewed and quickened life is filling the souls of His people with a holy longing for a complete consecration. Let us foster the Divine and sacred restlessness, for it is more blessed than the tranquillity of the world; let us welcome and enhance the holy longing for deeper communion with God—a longing more blessed than all the satisfactions of the world. Hungering and thirsting after righteousness, we shall be blessed in the Divine affection itself—blessed because we long for God; but blessed also because the desire is more than hungering and thirsting; it is also the prophecy of Divine and everlasting fruition and plenitude of blessing. O Thou strong Son of God! Immortal Love and Pity and Mercy! put Thy strong hand upon us and increase our faith. At Thy blessed touch our chains fall off, our weakness is made strong, and our selfishness recedes, and is lost in Thy blessed presence! Let us by faith look into Thy strong and gracious Face, and the world and its perishing interests shall sink into insignificance, and the victories and songs of a conquering experience shall fill our souls with a noble courage and an imperishable hope!

Thomas Rider

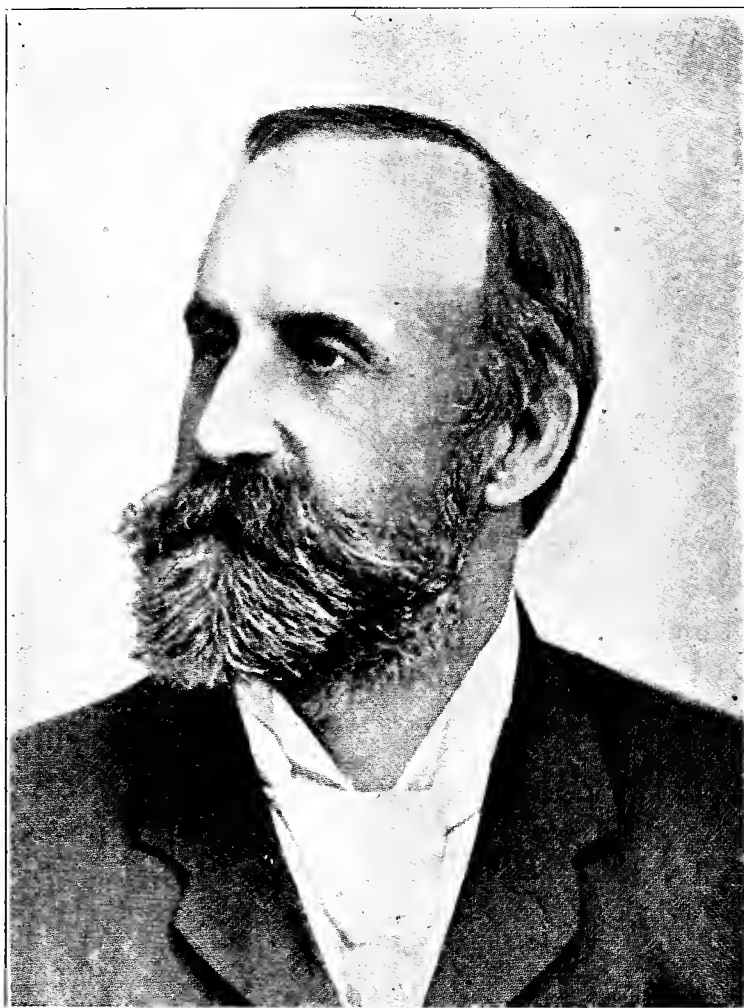
The Centenary Commemoration Fund.

THE movement which began at the Conference of 1894, when in a very short time there were spontaneous offers from members of Conference and others, ranging from a thousand guineas to five, and amounting to the sum of £11,450, has since met with wide and general support, and is a practical and substantial expression of the piety with which the Connexion gives thanks for its past and girds itself for future work. The financial effort then auspiciously started had for its aim "the consolidation and enlargement of local and Connexional interests;" it was begun and it has been sustained with the prayer "that it might be signalised by copious blessing, preparing the denomination for a future of new energy and fruitfulness."

The local objects comprised the extinction or reduction of debts on Trust Estates, renovation, enlargement, and improvement of existing premises and building of new chapels and schools. The schemes projected have been many and various, and have been carried forward with great generosity. It is too early yet to sum up the results, but there is no doubt that under the Centenary impulse conditions more favourable to abounding spiritual prosperity have been created in ampler provision for school and Church work, and in the removal of heavy debts, the interest on which absorbed both time and money that will now be set free for the accomplishment of the great spiritual purposes for which the Connexion exists.

It is by means of the Connexional institutions that the Denomination as a whole expresses itself, and generous support to these has been accorded. Home and Foreign Missions, the Chapel Fund, the Beneficent Society, the College, and a special effort for the benefit of local preachers

have all received a measure of support, which will doubtless be much larger before the Fund is finally closed. The appeal for the local preachers is an entirely new departure. They are, and must be, the right hand of the Churches' strength: there are three hundred more chapels than ministers in active service, and were it not for the arduous toil of the local



ALD. J. HEPWORTH, J.P., LEEDS,
General Treasurer Centenary Commemoration Fund.

preachers numerous congregations would be deprived of the Bread of Life. In recognition of their work so willingly undertaken, arrangements have been made for joining the Mutual Aid Society constituted by the Wesleyans, the United Methodist Free Churches, and the Wesleyan Reformers, and on the sum of £1,500 being paid the local preachers of the Methodist New Connexion will be entitled to all the benefits

of that admirable institution, which gives weekly allowances in time of sickness, annuities in old age, and funeral allowances at death.

The Conference of 1894 appointed Alderman Joseph Hepworth, J.P., Leeds, Treasurer of the Centenary Fund, and he has discharged the duties of his office with devotion and efficiency. The same Conference appointed the Rev. George



REV. G. PACKER,
General Secretary Centenary Commemoration Fund.

Packer, Huddersfield, General Secretary. An Executive Committee and a large General Committee representative of the whole Connexion were also appointed.

The total amount promised for local and Connexional purposes to the middle of May, 1897, is upwards of £88,000. For Connexional objects the sum of £6,500 is in hand, and it is expected this sum will be increased by the Conference

in June. It will require some time to wind up the effort, and it is hoped that Circuits that have done little so far for the Connexional branch, by reason of the local pressure, will see that they are properly represented in the Fund before it is closed. A detailed account of all the local enterprises, with the names of all subscribers to both local and Connexional objects, will be issued to the Circuits in due time.

Connexional expansion is sought, both for the glory of God and the good of men, but it will hardly come without there be first increased intensity of spiritual life. A fuller consecration, a re-kindled fervour where the fire has been allowed to die, an offering of love and service, as well as money, will if general, produce a prosperity greater than any of past days, and realise for the denomination the fulfilment of the promise, "Thy people shall be all righteous that I may be glorified : a little one shall become a thousand, and a small one a strong nation ; I the Lord will hasten it in His time."

