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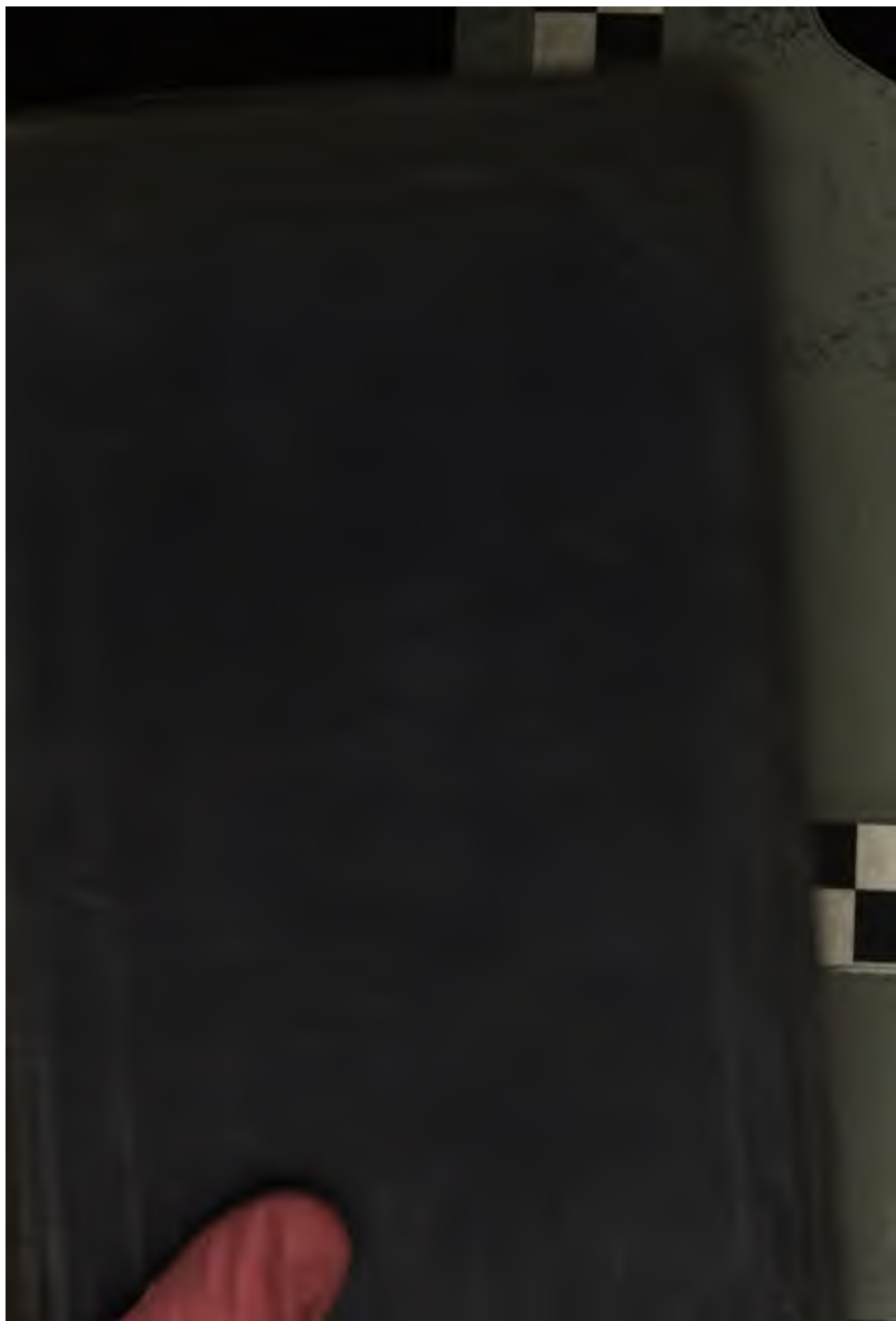
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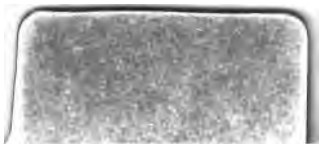
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THE
JUBILEE
OF THE
METHODIST NEW CONNEXION:
BEING
A GRATEFUL MEMORIAL
OF THE
ORIGIN, GOVERNMENT, AND HISTORY,
OF
THE DENOMINATION.

“CHRISTIANITY, INSTEAD OF WEAKENING OUR ATTACHMENT TO THE PRINCIPLES OF FREEDOM, OR WITHDRAWING THEM FROM OUR ATTENTION, RENDERS THEM DOUBLY DEAR TO US, BY GIVING US AN INTEREST IN THEM, PROPORTIONED TO THE VALUE OF THOSE RELIGIOUS PRIVILEGES THEY SECURE AND PROTECT.”—*Robert Hall*.

SECOND THOUSAND.

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PREFACE.

THE following treatise has been written on occasion of the Jubilee of the Methodist New Connexion ; and is intended to be a brief but faithful record of its origin ; distinctive principles ; and history. The spirit and form of controversy have been scrupulously avoided. Although the volume has been prepared for the special benefit of our own Denomination, it is believed that it contains much to interest the general reader.

The authors hope, that, in the judgement of every candid reader, they have fully redeemed the pledge contained in the following passage of their original prospectus : “ While the volume will enunciate our own principles, it will at the same time, preserve and manifest that charity which is due to all ‘ those who are of the household of faith,’ however they may differ on points of ‘ doubtful disputation.’ The work will thus be the means of promoting an enlightened denominational attachment and zeal ; and of advancing the highest purposes of scriptural Christianity.”

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CHAPTER I.

ORIGIN AND CHARACTERISTICS OF METHODISM — RELIGIOUS
CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY — JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY,
WHITFIELD AND OTHERS. — PECULIAR FEATURES AND EX-
CELLENCIES OF METHODISM — ITS RESEMBLANCE TO PRIMI-
TIVE CHRISTIANITY.

THERE was no institution in the Jewish economy more interesting and instructive, more accordant with the philosophy of human nature, more adapted to foster patriotic feeling, and strengthen religious principle, than the Jubilee. It divided the history of Jehovah's dispensations towards his ancient people into so many bright cycles, and furnished periodical occasions when memory surveyed and registered past mercies, when gratitude presented her offering, humanity dispensed her amnesties and blessings, and joy raised her national anthem of praise. "Time is like a ship that never anchors," but each returning Jubilee is a cheering lighthouse which breaks the monophany of the scene and reminds the crew of their progress; or a bright star which tells their longitude and points to their haven of eternal rest. We do well to adopt this periodical notation of our history as a religious denomination, and consecrate it as an era for grateful commemoration and benevolent contribution; for an emphatic avowal of our principles, and a solemn dedication of ourselves and our all to God. It becometh the just to be thankful, and the sentiment should be evinced and cherished by appropriate action. At this period, we are called upon to chronicle our mercies, survey our obligations, estimate our resources, and enquire both personally and connexionally, "How much owest thou to my Lord?"

With half a century past, when most of the fathers are fallen asleep, we pause, and solemnly review the way in which God has led us. Now the first cycle of our history has run its course, it is meet we should set up our Ebenezer, and inscribe thereon a grateful memorial of divine goodness, and register our vows of future fidelity and zeal. As a filial branch of the great Methodist family, we claim a common inheritance in its blessings, rejoice in all the good it has been instrumental in effecting, and feel a common obligation to render ardent thanksgiving to Him who is its Glorious Author. But as a distinct religious denomination, enjoying a system of rational freedom, in connexion with the sound doctrines, the scriptural ordinances, and the refreshing means of Methodism, we have cause for special gratitude. It is therefore the object of this volume to call to mind the obligations arising both from Methodism in general, as a great revival of primitive Christianity, and from that modification of its polity which distinguishes our own denomination.

When in the possession of privileges which have cost us neither suffering nor sacrifice to obtain, we are in danger of lightly appreciating them, of overlooking the loss we should sustain were they to be withdrawn, and the different state of society which would have characterized this age, had those privileges never been conferred. It is indeed impossible fully to estimate the advantages which the interests of religion and human weal have derived and will yet derive from the change which Methodism has given to the state of society since the middle of the eighteenth century. Their extent has no limit but the circumference of the globe, and their duration will descend to the latest generations of mankind. An eminent divine of the present age has given to Methodism the laudatory designation of "*Christianity in earnest.*" A designation truly characteristic, and expressive of the enlightened judgement and candour of its author. Methodism is emphatically "*Christianity in earnest,*" especially as it appears in its early history. In its doctrines and ordinances, in its *animus* and character, it is *Christianity*. In

its agencies, operations, and aims, it is *earnest*. Looking at the divinity of its origin, the vastness of its influence, and the extent of its success, we are constrained to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad."

Methodism is the name for one of those great movements which God has in different periods called forth to arouse a slumbering church; to enlighten and evangelize the masses of mankind. In some of its features it resembles other great movements which preceded it; but in its special characteristics it differs from them all. It partakes of the nature of both a revival of and a reformation of religion; but more of the former than the latter. It is rather truth vitalized and diffused, than error exploded. It affects not to reform existing creeds, but to save men's souls and reform their lives. Preceding dispensations of Providence had prepared the way for its peculiar mission—the propagation of vital godliness. The bulwarks of spiritual Babylon had been demolished, and the church purged of many monstrous and soul-destroying delusions; but the precious truths which had been thus exhumed from loathsome masses of corruption, and were then embodied in the Formularies of the respective Christian denominations, lay dormant and inert, and greatly required vitalizing power, practical development, and active diffusion. Such results could flow only from a revival of heartfelt, saving, religion; and this God accomplished, chiefly through the instrumentality of Methodism. As the cause is acknowledged to be of God, and its success less indebted to human contrivance, perhaps, than any other modern recension of Christianity, we can speak of its excellencies without the charge of carnal boasting, and compare it with other religious movements without invidious detraction. We pronounce it, then, to the honour of God, the most remarkable and extensive revival of religion since the apostles' days.

The Reformation in Germany, under Luther, was in many respects a great and blessed work. But the labours of Luther, in accordance with his intrepid and energetic genius,

and in adaptation to the state of society in which he lived, consisted more of arduous and protracted conflicts against error, against decrees of councils and papal authority, than in the diffusion of experimental religion ; and yet, amid storms of controversy and political commotion, the prolific seed of divine truth germinated and brought forth fruit unto salvation in many hearts. The glories, however, of the Lutheran Reformation were defaced by the dogma of consubstantiation, and other relics of Popery ; and Christianity, though freed from Roman usurpation, was left enfeebled and degraded by its subordination to secular jurisdiction. The Reformation in England threw off the Papal yoke, emancipated the human mind from degrading superstitions, restored the precious gem of saving truth to the church, sent forth free the word of life to the masses in their vernacular tongue, and presented a noble array of martyrs who sealed the truth with their blood ; yet that reformation was but partial and imperfect. From its commencement it was impeded by political influence and worldly interests ; and, at its termination, left the church weak from her dependence upon a secular arm, and degraded by her subjection to earthly authority. The Presbyterian Reformation in Scotland, was a further advance in the cause of religious freedom ; but the adoption of Augustinian decrees and predestination, as an essential part of the reformed religion, was a drag upon the chariot of the gospel, so that it “ drave heavily,” and ran but a narrow course ; while the legal provision for the ministry proved a bait to cupidity and a cause of heartless formalism ; and the concessions made to secular jurisdiction transferred the sceptre of Immanuel to earthly potentates, who used it as an iron rod to rule the church in subserviency to the State. The imperfection of this reformation is sufficiently evinced and acknowledged by the fact, that a recent revival of vital religion induced such clear views of truth and duty that the church could no longer endure her bondage to a secular authority, but at the expense of all her ample revenues, nobly asserted her freedom, and thus advanced another important step in the march of true reform.

The Reformation under the noble band of Puritan divines, led the Church another step in the right direction. Its heroes were men of giant intellect, indomitable energy, and profound learning — ornaments to our common nature, and an extensive blessing to mankind; while their writings defended the church against the shafts of infidelity and Popery, they fed the dying lamp of piety with the oil of the sanctuary; their self-denial exemplified the disinterested and unearthly genius of religion, and their church polity left the gospel as it ought to be, free from subjection to the dictum of the princes of this world. Yet the adoption of the Calvinian or Augustinian theology repressed, in some degree, the expansive spirit of Christianity, and checked its glowing fires. The neglect too of the *conneaxional principle* hindered the unity and energy of its action; and the absence of a lay ministry prevented its aggressive movements and rapid diffusion. In the defective systems therefore adopted by Christian churches, but more especially in the supineness, impiety, and profligacy which prevailed through the British nation, there was an urgent necessity for a further reformation and a more extensive revival of true religion.

Indeed, never was a revival of pure, experimental, and active Christianity more necessary in our country than in the age when Methodism dates its origin. The nation then sustained it is true, a high celebrity for its military prowess, for philosophy, poetry, and polite literature. The victorious arms of Marlborough had increased its martial laurels; the discoveries of Newton had given it the palm in natural science; the profound analysis of mind by Locke had placed it foremost in mental philosophy; the flowing numbers of Pope, and Thomson, sustained its reputation for poetry; and the productions of Addison, Steele, Johnson, and others, gave it an exalted literary reputation. But the religious aspect of the country presented a gloomy contrast. While literature flourished, Christianity drooped and languished. The manly piety and stern integrity of the martyr-age had decayed; the holy fires which burned in the puritanic fathers had become almost extinct; the restoration of the

Stuarts had brought in a flood of licentiousness ; the infidel philosophy of a neighbouring nation was being imported ; the works of Hobbes, Rochester, and Bolingbroke were corrupting the principles of the higher and middle classes ; while those in the humbler walks of life were uneducated and profligate. In fact, irreligion, vice, and depravity of manners were rampant through the community. The professing church presented no effectual barrier to this rising tide of immorality, and made but a feeble struggle to effect a reformation in the principles and habits which obtained, but had rather extensively imbibed the infidel spirit of the age, and become lax in her discipline, corrupt in her doctrines, and immoral in her character. In the Establishment, there was orthodoxy in the articles, homilies and liturgy, but formalism and antichristian heresy in the pulpit. There were indeed instances of profound learning and exalted talent, but where they existed they were often so equivocally employed as at one and the same time to be defending the evidences of religion, and undermining its experimental doctrines ; resisting the arrogant claims of Popery, yet re-building the Arian hypothesis ; maintaining the Athanasian creed, and asserting Pelagian errors. But the clergy in general were as indifferent to religion, as they were incompetent to teach it, and not a few were grossly immoral. While the doctrines of the Reformation were thus disowned and dishonoured in the Establishment, the Nonconformist churches had become in numerous instances corrupt in principle and degenerate in character. In many, predestinarian decrees had engendered Antinomianism ; and in others, the tenets of Arius and Socinus had displaced the saving doctrines of the cross.

When the Church had thus concealed her light, no wonder that the land was in darkness, and the people were destroyed for lack of knowledge. Theology thus impotent and truth thus caricatured, could exert but a feeble influence, and hence infidelity triumphed and profligacy and vice abounded. Many honourable exceptions there were, indeed, as we see in the character of Watts, Doddridge, Secker,

Leighton, Berridge, Adams, Venn, Romaine, Guyse, Hurrian, and other pious contemporaries, who like the weeping prophet of Judea, sighed over the broken walls of the church, and laboured for the restoration of truth and holiness; but their own testimony abundantly confirms the gloomy representation we have given.

The amiable Archbishop Leighton describes the Church in his day, as "a fair carcass without a spirit;" and Burnet, in 1713, complains that "the clergy had less authority, and were under more contempt, than those of any church in Europe; for they were much the most remiss in their labours, and the least severe in their lives." He affirms that "the greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers: I mean the plainest part of the scriptures, which they say in excuse for their ignorance, that their tutors in the Universities never mention the reading of to them; so that they can give no account, or at least a very imperfect one, of the contents even of the gospels. Those who have read some few books, yet never seem to have read the scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the Catechism itself, how short and plain soever. They cry and think it a sad disgrace to be denied orders; though the ignorance of some is such, that in a well regulated state of things, they would appear not knowing enough to be admitted to the holy sacrament. This does often tear my heart. The case is not much better with many, who, having got into orders, come for institution, and cannot make it appear that they have read the scriptures, or any one good book since they were ordained." Archbishop Secker, in 1738, thus describes the state of religion: "In this we cannot be mistaken, that an open and professed disregard to religion is become, through a variety of unhappy causes, the distinguishing character of the present age; that this evil is grown to a great height in the metropolis of the nation; is daily spreading through every part of it; and, bad in itself as any can be, must of

necessity bring in all others after it. Indeed it hath already brought in such dissoluteness and contempt of principle in the higher part of the world, and such profligateness, intemperance, and fearlessness in committing crimes, in the lower, as must if this torrent of impiety stop not become absolutely fatal."

Dr. John Guyse, referring to the anti-evangelical sentiments which were propagated amongst dissenters of that day, (1729) observes: "The present modish turn of religion looks as if we began to think we have no need of a Mediator; but that all our concerns were managed with God as an absolute God. The religion of nature makes up the darling topics of our age; and the religion of Jesus is valued only for the sake of that, and only so far as it carries on the light of nature, and is a bare improvement of that kind of light. All that is instructively Christian, or that is peculiar to Christ, — every thing concerning him that has not its apparent foundation in natural light, or that goes beyond its principles, is waived, and banished, and despised; and even moral duties themselves, which are essential to the very being of Christianity, are usually harranged upon without any evangelical turn or reference to Christ, as fruits of righteousness to the praise and glory of God by him: they are placed in the room of Christ, are set up independent of him, and are urged upon principles, and with views ineffectual to secure their practice, and more suited to the sentiments and temper of a heathen than of those that take the whole of their religion from Christ. What a melancholy symptom, what a threatening omen is this! Do we not already feel its dismal effects in the growth of infidelity, in the rare instances of conversion-work, and in the cold, low, and withering state of religion, among the professors of it, beyond what has been known in some former days?"

Dr. Watts, in the preface to his "Humble attempt to revive Religion," (in 1731) laments "the decay of vital religion in the hearts and lives of men; and the little success which the ministrations of the gospel have had of late for the conversion of sinners;" and this complaint, he says, is

made not only by Protestant Dissenters, but "is a general matter of mournful observation of all that lay the cause of God to heart."

Such then is the mournful testimony of devout and pious men, in describing the state of religion in their own day; and if necessary, many testimonies of like character and authority might be adduced. The state of things cannot be more graphically set forth in a few words than in the language of an able and impartial writer in the *North British Review*, of August, 1847: "Never has a century risen on Christian England so void of soul and faith as that which opened with Queen Anne, and which reached its misty noon beneath the second George—a dewless night succeeded by a sunless dawn. There was no freshness in the past, and no promise in the future. The memory of Baxter and Usher possessed no spell, and calls for revival or reform fell dead on the echo. Confessions of sin, and national covenants, and all projects towards a public and visible acknowledgement of the Most High were voted obsolete, and, in the golden dreams of Westminster, worthies only lived in Hudibras. The Puritans were buried, and the Methodists were not born.....The reign of buffoonery was past, but the reign of faith and earnestness had not commenced. During the first forty years of that century, the eye that seeks for spiritual life can hardly find it; least of all that hopeful and diffusive life which is the harbinger of more." Bishop Butler observes, "It was taken for granted that Christianity was not so much a subject for enquiry, but was at length discovered to be fictitious. And men treated it as if this were an agreed point among all people of discernment."

Had not the providence of God interposed at this crisis, the darkness must have deepened, the depravity gathered strength, and the state and character of the nation have degenerated to the worst degree; causing it to assume, long ere this, a mixed complexion of heathenism, infidelity, and profligacy, such as is revolting to contemplate. Events of a subsequent date would have aggravated existing evils, and

given force and activity to the most malignant and pernicious influences. The principles and example of the French nation ; the infidel metaphysics of Hume, and the atheistic philosophy of Mirabeau, Diderot, &c. ; the insidious scepticism of Gibbon, couched in elegant diction, and blended with an attractive theme ; the profane wit of Voltaire, and the coarse ribaldry of Paine ; the semi-deism of Priestley, with that of Belsham and Lindsay, and their co-adjutors of the low Socinian school ; the numerous equivocal lecturers on scientific subjects, investing nature with self-acting and independent powers, to the exclusion of God's presiding and active agency ; and the multitudinous sceptical publications, some elaborate, and others light and ephemeral, which since that day have continued to swarm from the press, would doubtless, without the counteracting agency of a powerful revival of experimental and practical religion — without such a revival as that exhibited in Methodism — have combined to corrupt the principles, and deprave the character of the nation, until the measure of its iniquity was full — to the very brim, and the land had become reprobate — blighted and accursed by its own enormities, and scathed and rejected of God. This awful doom, however, was averted, and that revival of religion denominated Methodism was the principal, though not the only, means at once of saving the country from so great a calamity, and of introducing the brightest era in British history.

As the great work was of God, so the agents thereof were chosen and qualified by himself ; and never were men more eminently adapted for their sacred calling. If the indomitable courage of Luther, the fiery fervour of Knox, the calm and uncompromising temper of Latimer and Ridley, the high-minded and unearthly genius of the Puritans, qualified them for sustaining their noble testimony to the truth, honouring it by the lustre of their example, and carrying forth its struggles to a triumphant issue ; so the profound convictions, the cheerful piety, the fearless courage, the effective eloquence, the glowing fervours, the disinterested benevolence, and the restless activity of the Wesleys and

Whitfield wonderfully fitted them for that mighty movement which aroused both the church and the world in the eighteenth century, the vibrations of which are still felt in our own country, and have extended their momentum to the most distant parts of the world.

John Wesley was born in the year 1703, at Epworth, of which parish his father was rector. When six years old John was marvellously rescued from the devouring flames, through the top window of his father's dwelling, just at the instant when the roof fell in and would have buried him in the burning ruins. He was thus emphatically a "brand plucked from the fire"—providentially rescued that he might become a burning and shining light in the church of God. From their earliest years, as Watson observes, "the Wesleys had an example in the father, of all that could render a clergyman respectable and influential; and in the mother there was a sanctified wisdom, a masculine understanding, and an acquired knowledge, which they regarded with just deference after they became men and scholars." As the result of pious training and especially as conducted by the assiduous care of the mother, early religious impressions were produced on the minds of the children, and John became so decidedly serious, that at eight years of age he received the sacrament at the hands of his father. In 1714 he was placed at the Charter House, where he was noticed for his diligence and progress in learning; and at seventeen he was elected to Christ's College, where, it is said, he pursued his studies with great advantage. At the age of twenty-one, he appeared as Dr. Badcock has observed, "the very sensible and acute collegian; a young fellow of the finest classical taste, of the most liberal and manly sentiments." About two years after this he was aroused from the carelessness into which he had relapsed, and began to entertain serious thoughts of taking Deacon's orders. The works he now read with a view to promote his personal piety and fit him for the solemn work of the ministry, were *The Christian's Pattern* by Thomas a Kempis, and *Bishop Taylor's Holy Living and Dying*; and he sought the same object by corre-

spondence with his mother; but though his desires and efforts were sincere, yet misty, defective, and erroneous views of the plan of salvation, detained him long at the foot of Sinai and kept him in spiritual bondage.

In the year 1725 he was ordained Deacon; in the following year was elected Fellow of Lincoln College; and when twenty-three, received the degree of Master of Arts. At College he united with his brother Charles and two other serious young men in a meeting held two or three evenings each week for reading the Greek Testament; and shortly after the number was increased by the accession of Mr. James Hervey, Mr. G. Whitfield, and others. Religion was the subject of their anxious inquiry, and doing good the object of their lives. They visited the prisoners to afford them religious instruction, they entered the chambers of affliction to impart consolation to the suffering and the dying, they sought out the poor and administered to their relief. Their strictness of living, their separation from profane persons and practices, and their conscientious regard to the duties of religion incurred the displeasure of the scoffing worldling, and brought upon them the epithet, Methodists—subsequently the established cognomen of the powerful communities which have sprung from their labours.

The Wesleys were still strangers to the joys of pardon, and though circumspect in life, ascetic in mortifications, and rigorous in formal observances, knew not the simple faith which unites the soul to the atonement, and yields the peace which passeth understanding. No spiritual guide was found within the cloistered walls of Oxford, and the ponderous folios of theology failed to open the interior eye of their minds to the light of salvation. It was in this state of dim obscurity, and perplexing anxiety, joined with upright purpose and godly sincerity, that they embarked as missionaries to America; but in two years, returned without either realizing the great object of their mission or obtaining that sense of pardoning love which is the grand spring of acceptable obedience to God. The dangers of a storm had however quickened their apprehensions, and the contrast

presented in the calmness and joyous confidence of some pious Moravians had more deeply revealed their own defective religion. "I went to America to convert the Indians," says John; "but O, who shall convert me? Who is he that shall deliver me from this evil heart of unbelief? I have a fair summer religion; I can talk well, nay, and believe, myself, while no danger is present; but let death look me in the face, and my spirit is troubled; nor can I say, to die is gain."

On the 7th of February, 1738, Mr. Wesley met Peter Bohler, a minister of the Moravian church; and this he notes as a day much to be remembered, because the interview and the subsequent conversations he had with that pious man led him to clearer views of the nature of justifying faith — "the sinner's short way of coming to God." The instructions of Bohler were afterwards confirmed and illustrated, as Wesley observes, "by the concurring evidence of several living witnesses who testified that God had so wrought in themselves, giving them in a moment such a faith in the blood of his Son as translated them out of darkness into light, and from sin and fear into holiness and happiness. Here ended my disputing. I could now only cry out, 'Lord help thou my unbelief.'"

In this state of mind he continued till May 24th, 1738, when he entered into the joyful liberty of the sons of God, and he describes his state in the following words: "I think it was about five this morning, that I opened my Testament on those words, 'there are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the Divine nature.' (2 Peter, i. 4.) Just as I went out I opened it again on these words, 'Thou art not far from the kingdom of God.' In the afternoon I was asked to go to St. Paul's. The anthem was, 'Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. O let thine ears consider well the voice of my complaint. If thou Lord wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss, O Lord, who may abide it? But there is mercy with thee: therefore thou shalt be feared. O Israel trust in the Lord, for with the

Lord there is mercy, and with him is plenteous redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his sins.'

"In the evening I went, very unwillingly, to a society in Aldersgate-street, where one was reading Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans. About a quarter before nine, while he was describing the change which God works in the heart through faith in Christ, I felt my heart strangely warmed. I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone for salvation; and an assurance was given me that he had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the 'law of sin and death.' I began to pray with all my might, for those who had in a more especial manner despitefully used me, and persecuted me. I then testified openly to all there, what I now first felt in my heart. But it was not long before the enemy suggested 'This cannot be faith, for where is thy joy?' Then was I taught that peace and victory over sin are essential to faith in the Captain of our Salvation; but that as to transports of joy, that they usually attended the beginning of it, especially in those who have mourned deeply, God sometimes giveth, sometimes withholdeth them, according to the counsel of his own will.

Thus John Wesley received the spirit of adoption, and went on his way rejoicing; and he glorified the God of his salvation by proclaiming to others the great things which God had done for him. Henceforth it was his meat and drink to do the will of God — the sole object of his long and illustrious life to testify the gospel of the grace of God, and to bring men to participate in the blessedness he enjoyed. To this end he performed incredible labours, cheerfully endured all kinds of reproach and persecution, made the noblest sacrifices, and exercised the most bountiful liberality. As an able and candid writer in the *North British Review* remarks: "To a degree scarcely paralleled, his strong instincts — the love of worldly distinction, the love of money, and the love of ease were annihilated. The answer which he gave to his brother, when refusing to vindicate himself from a newspaper calumny, 'Brother, when I devoted to God, my ease, my time, my life, did I except my reputation?' was no casual

sally, but the system of his conduct. From the moment that the Fellow of Lincoln went out into the highways and hedges, and commenced itinerant preacher, he bid farewell to earthly fame. And perhaps no Englishman, since the days of Bernard Gilpin has given so much away. When his income was thirty pounds a year, he lived on twenty-eight, and saved two for charity. Next year he had sixty pounds, and still living on twenty-eight, he had thirty-two to spend. A fourth year raised his income to one hundred and twenty pounds, and steadfast to his plan the poor got ninety-two. In the year 1775, the accountant-general sent him a copy of the excise order for a return of plate; 'Rev. Sir,—As the commissioners cannot doubt but you have plate, for which you have hitherto neglected to make an entry,' &c.; to which he wrote this memorable answer; 'Sir,—I have two silver tea-spoons at London, and two at Bristol. This is all the plate which I have at present; and I shall not buy any more while so many around me want bread. I am, Sir, your humble servant, John Wesley.' And it is calculated that he must have given more than twenty thousand pounds away; all his property when he died consisted of his clothes, his books, and a carriage. Perhaps like a ball burnished by motion, his perpetual activity helped to keep him thus brightly clear from worldly pelf; and when we remember its great pervading motive, there is something sublime in this good man's industry. Rising every morning at four, travelling every year upwards of four thousand miles, and preaching nearly a thousand sermons, exhorting societies, editing books, writing all sorts of letters, and giving audience to all sorts of people, the ostensible president of Methodism, and pastor of all Methodists, and amidst his ceaseless toil betraying no more bustle than a planet in its course, he was a noble specimen of that fervent diligence, which, launched on its orbit by a holy and joyful impulse, has ever afterwards the peace of God to light on its way. Nor should we forget his praiseworthy efforts to diffuse a Christianized philosophy, and propagate useful knowledge among religious people. In the progress of research most

of his compilations may have lost their value; but the motive was enlightened, and the effort to exemplify his own idea was characteristic of the well-informed and energetic man." His own works extend to fourteen large octavo volumes, and he abridged, revised, and printed no fewer than one hundred and seventeen distinct publications. He lived to the advanced age of eighty-eight years, and a cool observer, Alexander Knox, who met him towards the close of life, records, "so fine an old man I never saw. The happiness of his mind beamed forth in his countenance. Every look showed how fully he enjoyed 'the gay remembrance of a life well spent;' and wherever he went, he diffused a portion of his own felicity. Easy and affable in his demeanour, he accommodated himself to every sort of company, and showed how happily the most finished courtesy may be blended with the most perfect piety. In his conversation we might be at a loss whether to admire most, his fine classical taste, his extensive knowledge of men and things, or his overflowing goodness of heart. While the grave and serious were charmed with his wisdom, his sportive sallies of innocent mirth delighted even the young and thoughtless; and both saw in his uninterrupted cheerfulness, the excellency of true religion."

About the same time that John Wesley was introduced into the glorious liberty of the gospel, his brother Charles obtained the same blessing. Charles, like John, had long groped his misty way through doubts and fears, vainly striving to work out a legal righteousness, and find a claim to the Divine favour in conscientious mortifications, and the observance of prescribed duties. His error lay not in the performance of those duties but in his dependence upon them, for that dependence fostered the very passions he was striving to subdue, perpetuated the chains he was struggling to break, and obscured his view of that Saviour he was longing to find. But sincerity cannot be unobserved, nor pass unrewarded, by that God who readeth the heart; and he who sent Ananias to the blind and weeping Saul of Tarsus, sent a messenger of truth and peace to the striving and

anxious Charles Wesley. During his sickness, at Oxford, Peter Bohler visited him, and proclaimed the same truths which had led John to the knowledge of salvation. Bohler found him resting his hope of salvation upon "his best endeavours," and when this enlightened teacher significantly shook his head to intimate that such a hope was based upon a sandy foundation, "the Pharisee within" gave indications of dissent and dissatisfaction. After his recovery Charles repaired to London, where Bohler again visited him, and urged upon him the scriptural doctrine of justification by faith alone in the atonement of Christ. The result of this interview was, a deeper conviction of the insufficiency of his own righteousness, a breaking down of his pharisaical pride, and the engendering of a willingness to receive Christ on the humbling condition of simple faith in his death. This feeling soon ripened into intense earnestness, accompanied by a constant use of appropriate means, the reading of the Holy Scriptures and prayer. Luther on the Galatians, the work which had been so signally blessed to his brother, was a means of leading him to clearer views of the plan of salvation. On reading the preface of this work he writes :—

"I marvelled that we were so soon and entirely removed from him that called us into the grace of Christ, unto another gospel. Who would believe that our church had been founded on this important article of justification by faith alone? I am astonished that I should ever think this a new doctrine; especially while our articles and homilies stand unrepealed, and the key of knowledge is not yet taken away. From this time I endeavoured to ground as many of our friends as came to see me in this fundamental truth, — salvation by faith alone; not an idle, dead faith, but a faith which works by love, and is incessantly productive of all good works and all holiness."

The following extract from Dr. Whitehead is too important to be omitted; "On Whit-sunday, May 21st, he awoke in hope and expectation of soon obtaining the object of his wishes, the knowledge of God reconciled in Christ Jesus. At nine o'clock his brother and some friends came to him

and sung a hymn suited to the day. When they left him, he betook himself to prayer. Soon afterwards a person came and said, in a very solemn manner, 'Believe in the name of Jesus of Nazareth, and thou shalt be healed of all thine infirmities.' The words went through his heart, and animated him with confidence. He looked into the scriptures and read, 'Now, Lord, what is my hope? Truly my hope is even in thee.' He then cast his eye on these words, 'He hath put a new song into my mouth, even thanksgiving unto our God; many shall see it and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.' Afterwards he opened upon Isaiah xl. 1: 'Comfort ye, Comfort ye, my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned, for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins.' In reading these passages of scripture, he was enabled to view Christ as set forth to be a propitiation for his sins, through faith in his blood; and he received that peace and rest in God which he had so earnestly sought.

"The next day he greatly rejoiced in reading the one hundred and seventh Psalm, so nobly descriptive, he observes, of what God had done for his soul. He had a very humbling view of his own weakness; but was enabled to contemplate Christ in his power to save to the uttermost all those who come unto God by him." The physical strength and mental activity of Charles Wesley were not equal to those of his brother, yet his labours as a preacher rendered important service to the cause of Methodism, especially in its earlier history, and his fine poetical compositions have fed the flame of piety with the purest oil of the sanctuary and furnished songs for every emotion of the mind and for every occasion of religious worship.

There is another honoured name demands notice here, as the early companion of the Wesleys in their zealous labours, and as an important instrument in promoting the great revival of religion which distinguished the eighteenth century. The name of Whitfield will be at once anticipated. He was the son of a Gloucester publican, and born in the year 1714.

At college Mr. Wesley was his tutor, and both were members together of that little, pious, and philanthropic band of brotherhood, which obtained, as an opprobrium, the title of Methodist; and both passed through a similar process of doubt, perplexity, and ascetic mortification in their attempts to find the pearl of great price — the peace of God. Though ten years younger than his tutor, he was the first to obtain the grace that bringeth salvation. While pursuing a course of self-righteous fanaticism he was seized with an alarming illness. It sent him to the scriptures, and like the monk of Erfurt while perusing his Greek Testament with earnest yearning and wrestling prayer, the “open secret” flashed upon his mind. He beheld the perfect efficacy of the Redeemer’s blood; and believing in him for a present salvation, was transported with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Thenceforth his affections flowed a powerful current of gratitude and love, towards the great author of his salvation, and his life of active obedience, and quenchless zeal gave a convincing and a brilliant evidence that he had not believed in vain.

He was ordained by the Bishop of Gloucester, and the solemn impressions of his mind on that occasion, and the holy ardours which filled his consecrated bosom, are forcibly expressed in a letter which he wrote to a friend: — “Whether I shall ever have the honour of styling myself the prisoner of the Lord! I know not; but, indeed, my dear friend, I can call heaven and earth to witness that when the Bishop laid his hand upon me, I gave myself up to be a martyr for him who hung upon the cross for me. Known unto him are all future events and contingencies. I have thrown myself blindfold, and I trust without reserve, into his Almighty hands; only I would have you to observe, that till you hear of my dying for or in my work, you will not be apprized of all the preferment that is expected by George Whitfield.” Noble spirit! exalted sentiments! What unearthly motives, hopes, and principles, absorbed his sanctified mind! The love of a martyr, the zeal of a seraph glowed in his heart, and the eloquence of an angel dropped from his tongue. In

this spirit he commenced itinerant, and when the largest churches could not contain the multitudes who thronged to hear, he betook himself to the obsolete practice of open-air preaching, and there addressed listening thousands, on the great theme of salvation. But these apostolic labours were an offence against church order and the stiff formality which fetters the free spirit of the gospel. They therefore could not be tolerated by the hierarchy of the age, and in 1739, four years after Whitfield had taken the fields for his amphitheatre, he was excluded the church.

But exclusion from pent walls, opened for him the wide door of the universe, and gave him boundless scope among the millions of our race, and ready access to the neglected and forgotten of mankind. "He traversed England, Scotland, and Ireland, for four and thirty years, and crossed the Atlantic thirteen times, proclaiming the love of God, and his great gift to man. A bright and exulting view of the atonement's sufficiency was his theology, delight in God and rejoicing in Christ Jesus were his piety; and a compassionate solicitude for the souls of men, often rising to a fearful agony, was his ruling passion; and strong in the oneness of his aim, and the intensity of his feelings he soon burst the regular bounds, and began to preach on commons and village greens, and even to the rabble at London fairs. He was the prince of English preachers. Many have surpassed him as sermon makers, but none have approached him as a pulpit orator. Many have outshone him in the clearness of their logic, the grandeur of their conceptions, and the sparkling beauty of single sentences; but in the power of darting the gospel direct into the conscience, he eclipsed them all. With a full and beaming countenance, and the frank and easy port which the English people love — for it is the symbol of honest purpose and friendly assurance — he combined a voice of rich compass, which could equally thrill over Moorfields in musical thunder, or whisper its terrible secret in every private ear: and to this gainly aspect and tuneful voice he added a most expressive and eloquent action. But the glory of Whitfield's preaching was its heart-kindled and heart-melting

gospel. But for this, all his bold strokes and brilliant surprises might have been no better than the rhetorical triumphs of Kirwan and other pulpit dramatists. He was an orator but he only sought to be an evangelist. Like a volcano where gold and gems may be darted forth as well as common things, but where gold and molten granite flow all alike in fiery fusion, bright thoughts and splendid images might be projected from his flaming pulpit, but all were merged in the stream which bore along the gospel and himself in blended fervour. Indeed so simple was his nature, that glory to God and good-will to man having filled it, there was room for little more. Having no church to found, no family to enrich, and no memory to immortalize, he was the mere ambassador of God; and inspired with the genial piteous spirit of his embassy — so full of heaven reconciled and humanity restored — he soon himself became a living gospel. Radiant with its benignity, and trembling with its tenderness, by a sort of spiritual induction, a vast audience would speedily be brought into a frame of mind — the transfusion of his own; and the white furrows on their sooty faces told that Kingswood colliers were weeping, or the quivering of an ostrich plume bespoke its elegant wearer's deep emotion. And coming to his work direct from communion with his master, and in all the strength of accepted prayer, there was an elevation in his mien which often paralyzed hostility, and a self-possession which only made him amid uproar and fury, the more sublime. With an electric bolt he would bring the jester in his fool's-cap from his perch on the tree, or galvanize the brick-bat from the skulking miscreant's grasp, or sweep down in crouching submission and shame-faced silence the whole of Bartholomew fair; whilst a revealing flash of sententious doctrine or verified scripture, would disclose to awe-struck hundreds the forgotten verities of another world, or the unsuspected arcana of their inner man. 'I came to break your head, but through you, God has broken my heart,' was a sort of confession with which he was familiar; and to see the deaf old gentlewoman, who used to utter imprecations at him as he passed along the street, clambering up the pulpit stairs

to catch his angelic words, was a sort of spectacle which the triumphant gospel often witnessed in his day. And when it is known that his voice could be heard by twenty thousand and that ranging all the empire as well as America, he would often preach thrice on a working-day, and that he has received in one week as many as a thousand letters from persons awakened by his sermons; if no estimate can be formed of the results of his ministry, some idea may be suggested of its vast extent and singular effectiveness."*

Such were the master-spirits whom God raised up and so eminently qualified, with gifts natural and divine, for that extraordinary work to which they were called, and the blessed effects of which we enjoy at this day. Never were agents more adapted to arouse, enlighten, and evangelize a backsliding church, an ungrateful, licentious, apostate people. If Whitfield lacked system he had fire sufficient to light up the nation into a blaze; while John Wesley with less of the scathing lightning and alarming thunder in his eloquence, had a lucid precision in his teaching, an activity in his movements, and a dexterity in management, never equalled perhaps in the history of man. Both were equally faithful and heart-searching in their ministry, both abundant in evangelical labours, energetic in character, and steady in their aim to glorify God. Charles Wesley, though from his physical debility and tamer spirit, less adapted for leading the way in the great movement, yet was an excellent co-worker for a subordinate position; while his admirable genius struck the poetic lyre, and embodied in soft and harmonious numbers the spirit of the revival.

Never were sanctified minds more fitted for co-operation; the one was a complement to the other's deficiency, and their united qualities formed an agency of the most perfect combination. Thus one in object and heart and so adapted for conjoint usefulness, the Christian mind cannot but deplore that diversity of sentiment on some minor points should have led to a separation. Mr. Whitfield embraced the doctrine of absolute predestination, and Mr. John Wesley fearing its

* North British Review for August, 1847.

tendency to produce Antinomianism, published a sermon against that doctrine, which gave offence to Mr. Whitfield, and led to separation and temporary estrangement. This took place in 1743, about five years after Mr. Wesley's conversion; but a reconciliation was effected in 1750, so that although their societies continued separate, they preached in each other's chapels, and their hearts were cemented with true Christian affection. As an evidence of this, Whitfield added the following codicil to his will,—“I also leave a mourning-ring to my honoured and dear friends, and fellow labourers, the Revds. John and Charles Wesley, in token of my indissoluble union with them in heart and Christian affection, notwithstanding our difference in judgement on some particular points of doctrine.” At the special request of Mr. Whitfield, Mr. Wesley preached his funeral sermon at the Tabernacle in Moorfields.

The object of this volume is not to write a history of Methodism, and our limits will admit of no more than a cursory glance at the leading facts and features which mark its character and operations. “I believed, therefore have I spoken,” says the Psalmist, and is quoted by the apostle Paul, because personal faith is an essential qualification for the proclamation of Divine truth, and a powerful incentive to the duty. When Mr. Wesley had believed unto salvation, and received the witness in himself, he could not be silent. The love of Christ constrained him, and he laboured to persuade men to be reconciled to God. So long as the churches were opened to him he entered them and proclaimed therein the fresh and savoury doctrines of a present salvation by faith. These salutary truths were, however, in direct antagonism with the cold and insipid theology of the day, and repulsive to the formal, pelagian, and antinomian ministry of the age; and the zealous preacher soon received from almost every quarter the prohibition,—“Sir, you must preach no more in this place.” Repelled from the churches, he proclaimed the gospel in rooms; “but finding they would not contain a tenth part of the people that were earnest to hear, “I determined,” he says, “to do the same

thing in England, which I had often done in a warmer climate, namely, when the house would not contain the congregation, to preach in the open air. This I accordingly did, first at Bristol, where the society rooms were exceedingly small, and at Kingswood where we had no room at all; afterwards in or near London. And I cannot say I have ever seen a more awful sight, than when on Rose-green, or the top of Hannam-mount, some thousands were calmly joined together in solemn waiting upon God."

This apostolic practice he continued through life; and through this means myriads heard the gospel who would have lived and died in utter ignorance of Christ. In Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, Cornwall, and Moorfields, and from thence in hundreds of towns and villages in the various parts of the united kingdom, this evangelist and others of kindred spirit proclaimed the sinner's doom, the penitent's consolation, the believer's privilege, and multitudes heard to salvation. From the novelty of the practice, the gross ignorance and uncultivated habits of the lower classes, the hostility of ungodly ministers and magistrates, and the strangeness of evangelical truth to the ears of the people in general, these apostolical men often met with violent opposition and persecution. Stones, putrid eggs, with other offensive and hurtful missiles flew from the crowd, and hired miscreants way-laid and beat the servants of God, while the gall of malice flowed copiously in bitter sarcasm and vile misrepresentation from many a pen. This might be expected from the men of the world — the avowed enemies of truth and righteousness; but milder treatment and a temper more becoming the gospel might have been justly expected from some of Mr. Wesley's polemical opponents. Ministers of Christ, of professedly evangelical sentiments, were surely bound by their sacred character and office to exhibit more of the meekness and gentleness of Christ than they frequently did in opposing a disinterested and laborious servant of God. Mr. Richard Hill, his brother, Rowland Hill, and Mr. Toplady were among his most virulent opponents. Referring to these, Dr. Southey observes —

“ Never were any writings more thoroughly saturated with the essential acid of Calvinism, than those of the predestinarian champions. It would scarcely be credible, that three persons of good birth and education, and of unquestionable goodness and piety, should have carried on controversy in so vile a manner, and with so detestable a spirit.” The titles which some of these opponents affixed to their polemical works clearly indicate the malevolent temper in which they were written, as, “ An old Fox tarred and feathered,” “ More work for John Wesley,” “ The Serpent and the Fox,” “ Pope John,” &c. Toplady said that “ As a reasoner Wesley was one of the most contemptible writers that ever set pen to paper;” that “ blunders and blasphemies were two species of commodities in which Mr. Wesley had driven a large traffic;” and that he believed him to be “ the most rancorous hater of the gospel-system that ever appeared in this island.” We have cause to be thankful that in the present state of society, such abusive epithets can find no toleration, and are seldom resorted to by those who have any regard for their own character and station.

Amid these storms of opposition and persecution, Mr. Wesley held on his way neither slackening his exertions nor changing his doctrine; and it is gratifying to observe that while God was graciously owning his ministry, there were here and there some choice spirits who hailed his labours, rejoiced in his success, and defended both him and the truths he proclaimed. The Rev. Mr. Grimshaw, of Haworth in Yorkshire, was a friend and fellow labourer. The Rev. Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham in Kent, Dr. Coke, and the Rev. John Fletcher, Vicar of Madeley, were his special friends and helpers in the Lord. The latter blending angelic piety with exalted talent and a profound knowledge of theology, was a most successful defender of Mr. Wesley's doctrines against all his assailants. In his hands the dogmas of Antinomian theology, are cut to pieces, and the essential truths of vital and practical religion, are maintained with a force and conclusiveness such as must carry the judgement of every candid and impartial reader. In the

meantime Mr. Wesley's hands were strengthened by a host of labourers who rose up as the spontaneous and unexpected result of his own ministry. Some of these were men of great natural talents, and several rose to eminent acquirements. Thomas Olivers, by trade a shoemaker, and prior to his conversion, greatly addicted to the lower vices, became distinguished for his religious attainments and his ability as a minister. He wrote several able works in defence of Mr. Wesley's theology, and was the author of several hymns which indicate both refinement of taste and strength of intellect. "Lo he comes with clouds descending," &c., and "The God of Abraham praise," &c., are his compositions. — Thomas Walsh, whose deep-toned piety and fervent zeal, were only equalled by his attainments in sacred learning. Though he died at the age of twenty-eight, Mr. Wesley states "if he was questioned concerning any Hebrew word in the Old, or any Greek word in the New Testament, he would tell after a little pause, not only how often the one or the other occurred in the Bible, but also what it meant in every place. Such a master of biblical knowledge I never saw before, and never expect to see again." — John Nelson, brought to God by hearing Mr. Wesley in Moorfields, was a man of vigorous intellect, manly piety, abundant labour, and thorough acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures. Dr. Clarke, Mr. Benson and others at a later period would have honoured any denomination by their attainments as scholars and their writings as divines. In fact, the ministers of the Methodist community in general, even in the days of Mr. Wesley, though destitute of the advantages of collegiate training, were far better qualified to preach the gospel, than the majority of those who had been brought up at Oxford or Cambridge, and such is the case at the present day. Speaking of his ministers in general Mr. Wesley remarks, "In one thing which they profess to know they are not ignorant men. I trust there is not one of them who is not able to go through such an examination, in substantial practical divinity, as few of our candidates for holy orders, even in the university (I speak it with sorrow, and shame, and in tender

love) are able to do." If, in general, not competent to construe the Greek poets, or demonstrate the theorems of Euclid, they were mighty in the scriptures, and wise to win souls; they uttered the truths they believed and felt, they expounded doctrines in which they were made wise unto salvation, and they declared the counsel of God, though not with classic elegance, yet with English honesty and force, accompanied with that flow of melting tenderness and affection, such as experimental Christianity alone inspires.

These devout and earnest ministers drank deeply into Mr. Wesley's spirit, and zealously threw their whole energies into the great work of spreading-saving religion through the land. Some uniting the labours of preaching with an honest calling as tradesmen, and others surrendering their business that they might be wholly devoted to the gospel. Like their devoted father in the gospel they were ready to encounter reproach, persecution, and death in seeking the salvation of men; and while many were maltreated, some were pressed as seamen or soldiers, others were imprisoned; and others like Thomas Walsh, fell into a premature grave, the result of the hardships they endured, and the wanton cruelty they experienced in their arduous and self-denying labours to save immortal souls. The word spoken by these humble but laborious men, was owned of God. It came to the heart with the demonstration of the Spirit and with power. Speedily thousands were awakened and converted. The hardest hearts were softened; the most licentious and depraved were transformed into the brightest ornaments of truth and holiness. "The word of the Lord had free course and was glorified."

In an original manuscript letter from Mr. Wesley which some time ago fell into our hand, the venerable man exhorts one of his preachers to endeavour to push out his labours to several towns beyond the immediate sphere of his exertions, and concludes in his usual laconic style, with these words "*say not you will do just so much or so much, but do all you can for God.*" There are two important sentiments couched in these words. One is that whatever a man does is to be "for God," with a view to do his will and promote his glory;

and the other is that a man is not to determine the amount of labour he will perform, by his calculations as to how much may appear creditable to others, but by his ability — his whole physical and mental power, and his whole opportunities and means for usefulness, alone are to be the standard. — “*He must do all he can for God.*” This was undoubtedly the motto of Mr. Wesley himself, and to a considerable extent the motto also of his devoted co-adjutors in the sacred work, and hence Methodism spread with amazing rapidity through England, and soon extended to Ireland, Scotland, and the channel islands.

From Ireland in 1766 the cause spread to America, through the instrumentality of Philip Embury who emigrated to New York. Here a society was formed, and the little church being strengthened by the emigration of other pious persons, the good work was extended to different parts of that immense continent; and in the year 1769 two preachers, Messrs. Richard Boardman and Joseph Pilmoor were sent to labour in that important field.

So early as the year 1760, the gracious influence of this revival extended to the West Indies, and through it the sable slave was introduced into the liberty of the sons of God. The honoured instrument in this instance was no other than Nathaniel Gilbert, Esq., the speaker of the House of Assembly. This gentleman being in England for the recovery of his health, was induced to attend the ministry of Mr. Wesley, and through it was brought to the knowledge of the truth. Returning to Antigua full of the love of God, he began to teach both the Negro and the white man the way of salvation. His labours were blessed of God, and about two hundred persons were united in church fellowship. On the death of Mr. Gilbert, the coloured people were without the supervision and care of a minister or leader; but two black women met the negroes, and got the people together every night for prayer and religious converse, until the providence of God sent them a spiritual guide and shepherd. John Baxter, a ship carpenter of the Royal Dock, at Chatham, was sent by Government to Antigua, and being a member

and local preacher in the Methodist body, collected the scattered members and took them under his paternal care. In a letter to Mr. Wesley, written in 1778 he states, "The work that God began by Mr. Gilbert is still remaining. The black people have been kept together by two black women, who have continued praying and meeting with those who attended every night. I preached to about thirty on Saturday night; on Sunday morning to about the same number; and in the afternoon of the same day to about four or five hundred. The old members desire that I would inform you, that you have many children in Antigua, whom you never saw. I hope we shall have an interest in your prayers, and that our christian brethren will pray for us." It was eight years before a missionary was sent, but John Baxter fed this flock of Christ, in the true spirit of Methodism—combining his toils in the dock yard with his vigilant pastoral attention and his labours for the welfare of souls, and with such success that about two thousand persons were united in church fellowship.

It is not compatible with our limits to trace the successive progress of Methodism, but at the death of Mr. Wesley in 1791, the work had so far extended that the number of preachers in the British dominions was three hundred and thirteen, and the members of the various societies seventy-six thousand nine hundred and sixty-eight; while in the United States of America there were one hundred and ninety-eight preachers, and fifty-seven thousand six hundred and twenty-one members.

One hundred and nine years ago the Methodist community had no existence, but now it may be asked, "Where does it not exist?" "Where is its blessed influence not felt?" Besides reviving religion in other churches it has filled our land with religious light, with a living and efficient ministry, and thousands of Sabbath schools. It has extended to the regions beyond, and, despite all opposition, has fixed itself in every quarter of the world. It has hastily followed the track of the navigator, and tamed and blessed many of the most savage islanders, with the enlightening and soul-transforming influence of gospel principles. It has anticipated the

researches of the traveller, and outstripped the enterprising colonist, in exploring the dark regions of the earth, as the scenes where its benign labours might illumine and save degraded man. And now this system of yesterday, numbers in its various sections, one million six hundred and seventy thousand members; and employs five thousand eight hundred circuit ministers, and probably about twenty thousand or upwards of local preachers; while in missionary contributions it takes the lead of the oldest and wealthiest denominations in the world! To God be all the praise.

As Methodism has now existed for nearly four generations it is not improbable that as many as *three or four millions* of souls, have through its instrumentality, been landed safe in glory. May we not exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" "It is the Lord's doing and is marvellous in our eyes!" As it is impossible fully to estimate the immense amount of good which directly and indirectly, temporally and spiritually, has accrued to mankind, through the instrumentality of Methodism, so on the other hand it is impossible to estimate the awful amount of national guilt and misery, which it has prevented. Had the causes of evil which existed prior to the conversion of Wesley and Whitfield continued in full and unrestrained operation, the light of our candlestick would have been almost extinguished, the blessings of the Protestant reformation neutralized, popery, or infidelity, have gained the ascendancy, and awful scenes of anarchy and bloodshed have been acted in our favoured island, as well as on the continent. But should Methodism retain its vitality, it will continue to bless and save mankind. It will continue to extend the kingdom of Christ on earth and people heaven with myriads of sanctified spirits. If such has been its influence in little more than *one* century, what may we not expect within the next? Favoured with such a boon as its privileges and blessings present, handed down to us through the toils, prayers, and sacrifices of our forefathers, we are in duty bound not only to cherish the liveliest gratitude to God, but to evince our gratitude by doing all in our power to preserve Methodism in all its purity and energy, and to transmit its blessings unimpaired to posterity.

While the Spirit of God has crowned Methodism with such abundant success, his Providence has wonderfully directed its movements, and met its exigencies as they occurred. Indeed, in constructing the machinery of Methodism, its agents seem to have been led step by step, not only without any pre-concerted plan, but often in direct opposition to their expectations, prejudices, and desires. Mr. Wesley expressly states, when speaking of himself and colleagues, "I must first premise that as they had not the least expectation, at first, of any thing like what has since followed, so they had no previous design or plan at all; but every thing arose just as the occasion offered. They saw or they felt some impending or pressing evil, or some good end necessary to be pursued. And many times they fell unawares on the very thing which secured the good, or removed the evil." Again he says, when speaking of his own and his brother's preaching "We had no view therein but, so far as we were able, to convince those who would hear what true Christianity was, and to persuade them to embrace it." Many passages might be quoted from his works shewing that he had no object but that of saving souls, and reviving religion in existing denominations, without any plan to organize a distinct body of Christians, and without the least expectation or desire for such a result. Hence Providence led him by a way that he knew not, often thwarting his inclinations and shocking his prejudices, and in these instances the finger of God is remarkably obvious. Methodism was especially designed to arouse the multitudes of thoughtless and ungodly people, who attended no place of worship; and it is obvious such characters were not accessible to any extent except by open air preaching: yet Wesley at first thought preaching ought to be confined to consecrated walls. "I thought" says he "the saving of souls almost a sin, if it were not done in a church." But God permitted the churches to be closed against him, and he was hence compelled to lift up his voice in the open-air. It was then, when (to use his own words) "he became vile in proclaiming salvation in the highways," that the neg-

lected thousands in Moorfields, the miners of Cornwall, the colliers of Newcastle, and ungodly myriads in all parts of the kingdom, heard the truths of the gospel, and were saved.

Wesley was at one time peculiarly "tenacious in every point of Church order," and wished to restrict himself to the forms prescribed by the Rubric; but the nation could not be evangelized by men trammelled with such formal restraints. Providence therefore placed him in such circumstances, that, despite his scruples, he was compelled to break through ecclesiastical restraints, or resist the plain dictates of his conscience. Then truth prevailed over prejudice, and church order gave place to the claims of perishing souls, and the glory of God.

At one time Mr. Wesley shrunk from the responsibility of having the care of a single parish, and as he tells us, "was in haste to retire to Oxford, and bury himself in his beloved obscurity;" but here again Providence crossed his natural inclination, and frustrated his purpose. He was detained in London contrary to his desire, and before he could retire to his "beloved obscurity," a chain of events occurred which thrust him out to the highways and hedges to call sinners to repentance; and from that hour, he found that the "world itself was his parish," and nothing but incessant action through an unlimited field of labour was prescribed for him by the providence of God.

Mr. Wesley had an inveterate repugnance to lay-preaching. As a high-churchman, he thought none should exercise in the ministry but those who had been regularly educated, and episcopally ordained; and when informed that plain Thomas Maxfield had "turned preacher," he hastened to London with all speed to stop the irregularity; but God showed him that the work of evangelizing England was not to stand still, until either educated and ordained men were willing to do it, or until men who were willing had graduated at a college: He who thrust out Wesley to stand forth in the open-air, thrust out Maxfield, Nelson, and others to preach the gospel; and so visibly fixed his own seal upon their labours, that Wesley's prejudices were subdued. Even

his discreet and prudent mother, with all her predilections for church-order, said to her son. "John, you know what my sentiments have been, you cannot suspect me of favouring readily any thing of this kind, But take care what you do respecting that young man, (Thomas Maxfield,) for he is as surely called of God to preach as you are. Examine what have been the fruits of his preaching; and hear him also yourself." He did so, was convinced, and at once bowed to the will of God. Henceforth a host of chosen men were raised up as his auxiliaries and successors in diffusing vital religion through the land.

The formation of classes and societies originated in a way unlooked for by the venerable founder of Methodism. Souls awakened by his heart-searching ministry, came to him enquiring for salvation. In the year 1739, eight or ten such persons came to him deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. Shortly after, others came for the same object. To save time, he appointed one day in each week to meet such persons. Presently the number became so great that he divided them into small companies called classes, according to their respective places of abode. There were about twelve persons in every class; one of whom was styled the leader. Thus originated the society at Fetterlane, and the classes of which it was composed; and such became the type after which others were subsequently formed in every part of the kingdom, and in almost every part of the world.

Again; it entered not into the design of the devoted single-hearted Wesley to create a distinct denomination. Tenacious in his adherence to the establishment, he expected his people generally to cherish the same feeling. He abhorred the idea of forming a distinct, much less a dissenting community, and took every precaution to prevent such a result. Considering himself and his people as a part of the Established Church he scrupulously endeavoured to avoid trespassing upon the Church prerogatives, or of rivaling Church institutions. With this view he adopted secular terms for ecclesiastical officers, &c. calling his preachers

helpers, not ministers ; other labourers, *leaders* and *stewards*, not elders and deacons ; his associated people, *societies*, not churches. He avoided preaching in Church hours, and did not allow his ministers to give the sacrament to their people, but expected both preachers and people to receive the sacrament at the parish church. These facts, doubtless evince the simplicity of his intention, and show how very far removed from his mind was the ambition of forming a sect ; and probably such an imperfect economy might be adapted to the state of society at that time. But it is remarkable, that while Wesley 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, and subsequent events have clearly shown, that Methodism could not fulfil its mission, either by being merged within the establishment or by continuing to occupy the position it did in the time of its venerable founder. However that anomalous position might suit its infancy, or be permitted for wise purposes for a period, it could not comport with its maturity. As the primitive church was destined in its full development not only to be freed from Jewish forms, but to be ultimately severed from its connexion with the Jewish system, so Methodism was designed ultimately to exist as a distinct denomination, enjoying within itself all the ordinances and privileges of the church of God. The design of Providence was *not* to make Methodism like the Church, but to make the Church like Methodism. This was the line of progression, the other was the line of retrogression, and Providence never designed his people to move backward.

But, as we have already seen, Methodism, as a system, was gradually developed ; its agencies, means, and institutions, being called forth as they were required to answer the intentions of Providence ; and though Methodism had greatly advanced during the life of its distinguished founder, its full development, independence, and maturity, as a denomination, were reserved until that devoted servant of God was called to his reward. Such events clearly show that Methodism was not the creature of man, but was originated

and carried onward in its great and distinguishing characteristics by the Providence of God.

In the train of Providential events which have contributed to build up Methodism and promote its prosperity, we cannot refrain from noticing the gift of poetry so richly bestowed upon the founders of the denomination. To some this may appear trivial ; but to our mind it is one of high importance, and strongly characteristic of the wisdom and goodness of that Being, who raised up men to introduce so great a revolution in the sentiments and habits of millions of our fellow-men. As compared with existing denominations, Methodism is unique in some of its best features ; and its interests certainly required that its psalmody should harmonize with its character. Its doctrines of free grace, universal redemption, justifying faith, the Spirit's witness, and entire sanctification ; its intimate and holy fellowship, its clear apprehensions of duty, its sublime morality, and its intense missionary ardour, required to be embodied in poetic numbers for devotional purposes. He who said, " Let me make a nation's songs, and I care not who makes its laws," understood human nature — understood the power of poetry and vocal music to inspire sentiments in the heart and mould the character of a people. But where was poetry to be found to express the *animus* of the Methodist body ? Evangelical as are the sentiments, refined and excellent as is the poetry of Watts, Doddridge, Cowper, and others, they are not in every sense adapted. We know of no collection but one which can fully utter both the doctrinal sentiments and the vigorous pulsations of the Methodistic heart, and that is the poetry of John and Charles Wesley. In the category of our blessings, the Wesleyan Hymn Book should not be reckoned the least. Besides its high qualities in respect of poetic composition, it is a vehicle through which truth is conveyed, and a means by which that truth is remarkably preserved. It comprises a body of the soundest theology, the richest experience, and the sublimest morality. Its absence would have left a vacuum in our privileges, which no other hymn book, ancient or modern, could supply. *Let us then heartily thank God for such a gift of his*

providence, and adore that wisdom which so admirably fitted his chosen servants for the work which he called them to perform.

Many other instances might be selected, indicative of the guiding hand of God in reference to Methodism, but time would fail. The reader's own recollections of Methodistic history may supply a multitude. We merely remark that, in distant ages Methodism will be contemplated with a still deeper conviction of its importance to the interests and well-being of mankind; and those honoured men who were instrumental in originating and extending it will be regarded with deeper veneration and esteem as ages roll on. John Wesley, as a man, had his errors and infirmities, some of which will hereafter be noticed, but in intelligence, piety, benevolence, simplicity, and purity of character, he has had few equals, while in activity, industry, energy, and public usefulness, he has perhaps had no equal since the martyrdom of St. Paul.

Many have been the strictures upon Methodism during its brief history, and as might be expected the sentiments which men have expressed have been diversified and modified, according to the clearness or obscurity of their intellectual vision—the morbid or healthy state of their spiritual taste. While the enlightened and generous mind of Chalmers designates it “Christianity in earnest,” the purblind poet laureate speaks of its spiritual characteristics as a “new and specific disease.” Dr. Vaughan, while speaking of “the daring irregularities, and the astounding novelties of Methodism,” in a tone of apology and candour, accords to it the high praise of having “remembered the forgotten, attended to the neglected, and visited the forsaken.”* Again he remarks, “It is when we look on Methodism as a whole, and in its great moral results, that we see it to be of God. It is in this manner that we are accustomed at our present distance, to regard the progress of the Reformation; and in the same manner a devout posterity will regard the progress of Methodism.”† Without affecting to claim perfection for

* *The Modern Pulpit*, p. 126.

† *Ibid* 129.

Methodism, we are of decided opinion that, in several respects, it is far in advance of preceding religious movements; that it was remarkably adapted to rouse the nation from its lethargy, and promote the diffusion of vital religion through the earth; and that it is, indeed, the most aggressive, the most effective form under which Christianity has presented itself since the age of the apostles. In its origin and leading features, and even in what are called its "daring irregularities and astounding novelties," it presents, perhaps, a closer resemblance to primitive Christianity, than is presented in the history of any other religious denomination.

Primitive Christianity did not originate in political commotion, or ecclesiastical disruption, but commenced its peaceful triumphs simply by the operation of truth upon the minds of men, rendered powerful by the agency of the Holy Spirit. So Methodism had a purely spiritual origin. It commenced in the conversion of the Wesleys, and was propagated and continued by the simple announcement of truth, made mighty by the energy of the Holy Ghost. There had previously been a shaking of nations; the storming of Rome's proud citadel had convulsed the earth; and those mighty agitations, in destroying the man of sin, had prepared society for the more tranquil and evangelical labours of the founders of Methodism, and contributed no doubt to their success. Primitive Christianity rose unfettered by state controul, and was propagated independently of state support. Methodism likewise went forth as free, in this respect, as the angel in the Apocalyptic vision; relying on no earthly power, sustained only by the resources which spontaneously sprang from its own principles and exertions. Primitive Christianity created for itself means of Christian communion. Sanctifying the social principles of our nature, it gathered its disciples into brotherhood, and provided for the expression and interchange of religious sentiments in feasts of charity and social means. Acts ii. 46. So did Methodism. Religious sentiment and feeling seek to express themselves not only in preaching but in fellowship.

The heart spontaneously breathes its desires in the language of the Psalmist, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul." Methodism provides for this spiritual longing by our love-feasts, class-meetings, and bands, where "they that fear the Lord speak often one to another." When such means are not held in a Church, there is an essential defect in its organization. Religious emotions must have vent and expression, or like pent-up fires they will smoulder and expire.

Primitive Christianity employed a lay-agency, as well as a regular ministry, and, indeed encouraged and commanded all its members to labour for its diffusion. Methodism has presented a remarkable development of this principle. It first brought men under the power of Divine truth, and then thrust them forth to call sinners to repentance. Thus it spread through the land with amazing rapidity; and thus it continues to bless thousands of towns and villages with an evangelical ministry, plain, but heart-searching in its character, and soul-saving in its effects. Where such an agency is neglected, no wonder if religion languishes or moves with a crippled foot and a tardy pace. This practice is regarded, no doubt, as one of "the daring irregularities and astounding novelties of Methodism;" yet this "novelty" is as ancient as the religion of the Bible, and this "astounding irregularity" is sanctioned by divine authority. Under the Jewish economy the prophets were, for the most part, not of the anointed priesthood, but men of the laity. In the New Testament we read that when the disciples "were all scattered abroad, except the apostles," those disciples — those brethren of the laity — "went everywhere preaching the word, in Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch." Nor did God rebuke their efforts, but impressed them with the seal of his approval and blessing, because they were doing his will. "And the hand of the Lord was with them; and a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." And when Barnabas visited the church at Antioch which these lay disciples had planted, he did not reprove their ministerial labours, nor repine at their wonderful success; but when

“he saw the grace of God, was glad and exhorted them all that with purpose of heart they would cleave unto the Lord.”* The ancient Christian church at a subsequent period sanctioned the same practice. It is recorded that when Origen went from Alexandria into Palestine, though unordained, he was desired by the bishops of that country to preach in the churches. Alexander, the bishop of Jerusalem, and the Bishop of Cesarea, in a joint-letter to the bishop of Alexandria, justify the practice of lay-preaching, and maintain that “Wherever any are found that are fit to profit the brethren, the holy bishops of their own accord ask them to preach unto the people.” The adoption of lay-preaching, therefore, by Methodism was a revival of an obsolete custom, sanctioned by divine authority and ancient as Christianity itself. It is the exclusion or discouragement of lay-preaching which is a “novelty,” and an “irregularity,” and one too which is closely allied to the haughty pretensions of Puseyism and Popery. Methodism not only brought piety from the tomb, but burst the bandages by which she had been restrained, and bid her go free and bless the nations of the earth.

Primitive Christianity was eminently missionary in its character. Aggressive, uncompromising, and diffusive, it sought to conquer and to bless the whole world. Its disciples fired with its spirit, were unceasing in their exertions to diffuse it through the earth. Methodism was distinguished by the same character, and aimed at the same objects: its early adherents lived under the same holy excitement, and passed through prodigious labours to save the souls of their fellow-men. It compassed sea and land, and has now engirdled the globe, not to make men proselytes to a creed, but to make them partakers of the great salvation, and extend the kingdom of the Redeemer. The leading agents in the diffusion of primitive Christianity were itinerant. Methodism adopted this *modus operandi*, as best adapted and most efficient for that missionary work to which it was called.

* Acts viii. 1—4. Acts xi. 19—24.

The nation required to be enlightened and aroused, and no plan could have suited so well, either the agents employed, or the end to be accomplished. The messengers of truth were to run to and fro, that knowledge might be increased. We wish not however to contend for the *absolute*, and *unconditional* restrictions which Mr. Wesley left in his rules on this subject, as they tie up the hands of the church and exclude the exercise of a sound discretion respecting cases where special providential indications, or the altered state of society, might demand some modification of the principle. We have reason to be thankful that while our excellent constitution secures this principle unaltered so long as necessary for the welfare of the body, it renders a modification practicable whenever the general sentiments of our people shall deem it subservient to the interests of the Connexion. This is rational, and in accordance with that religious dependence upon the guidance of a gracious Providence, which all churches should cherish.

Primitive Christianity was, in a general sense, connexional. As members were united to each other in the same church, so were churches united to each other as so many parts of the universal church of Christ; and this union was recognized not only by the exercise of Christian love and occasional intercourse, but by the closest ties of connexion — by the intercommunion of Ministers, by the supply of mutual pecuniary aid, by representation in synodical convocation, and above all by their mutual subordination to synodical authority. Acts xv. Now this important principle is embodied in the organization of Methodism, and here is the great secret of its internal vigour, its expansive and aggressive character. It is the key-stone which gives cohesion and strength to every part of the fabric. It gives unity to its spirit and resistless energy to its operations.

There is another interesting fact in the history of Methodism, and one in which it symbolizes with the primitive church — namely, *the restoration of the union between evangelical piety and the doctrine of general redemption*. In the holy scriptures, and in the early history of the Christian

church these doctrines were in constant association, and ought never to have been separated. But, as Faber justly observes, "Augustine, at the beginning of the fifth century, confessedly stands forth, as the original inventor of that scheme of interpretation, which in our days, is usually denominated Calvinism." Indeed Augustine, in one place at least, somewhat incautiously acknowledges himself to have diligently *sought out* and *discovered* this doctrine; and when charged with introducing a novel doctrine, he was unable to disprove the charge by adducing any pertinent and satisfactory quotations from the writings of ancient fathers, in support of his views.* But the writings of Augustine against Pelagius, obtained celebrity, and prepared the way for the novel doctrine of predestination. This gave a complexion to orthodox theology in all subsequent ages. From his day evangelical sentiments have commonly been held in unnatural combination with absolute predestination, unconditional election, and partial redemption; while general redemption has often stood unhappily connected with Arian and Pelagian heresies; and the reforms of Luther, Calvin, Knox, and English martyrs, instead of dissolving, inculcated and perpetuated the Augustinian theology.

The Methodistic reformation, however, introduced a new era in the history of doctrine. It burst asunder the unseemly

* Faber states again in the dedication of his work on the Apostolicity of Trinitarianism, "After much superfluous discussion he (Augustine) claims to produce exactly three witnesses in his favour: Cyprian to wit, and Ambrose, and Gregory of Nazianzen. Now with respect to this woefully meagre tale of authorities, even were such authorities pertinent and distinct and full to his purpose; still to carry any real weight, they would be all far too modern; for Cyprian flourished not until the middle of the third century; and Ambrose and Gregory lived during the latter part of the fourth century. But, in truth, with the scanty exception of nine words written by Ambrose, their several testimonies are altogether nugatory and irrelevant: so that in point of historical evidence as afforded by those fathers who preceded Augustine, the whole mighty fabric of Calvinism rests upon the single Ambrosian sentence; *Deus, quos dignatur, vocat: et, quem vult, religiosum facit.*" God calls men as he thinks meet; and imparts religion to whomsoever he wills. Truly the Calvinian theory of Predestination cannot boast of its antiquity.

combination which Augustine had effected, and liberated the truths of vital godliness from a species of religious fatalism. It revived the apostolic doctrine of general redemption, of unbounded mercy, of free and full salvation; and associating it with the attributes of experimental and practical holiness, sent it forth through the world. While it redeemed Christianity from the practical deformity of Antinomianism, it rescued it from the doctrinal harshness and injustice involved in a limited atonement, and absolute and unavoidable reprobation. It presented Christianity in her virgin purity, in her celestial benignity and loveliness, as she shone forth on the day of Pentecost, and in the apostolic times of refreshing, when thousands in a day were added to the church. True it spared not its terrible denunciations against the impenitent sinner; it thundered aloud as from the fiery summit of Sinai the terrors of the Lord; but it proclaimed in strains as sweet as angels use, the efficacy of a universal atonement, and the boundless mercy of God towards every contrite soul. It directed every returning prodigal to Calvary, showed him the throne of grace, sprinkled with atoning blood, and bid him welcome to the fullest mercy and the richest grace his guilt and depravity might require. It discarded all the "*ifs*" and "*buts*" and "*special reservations*," by which Calvinism had fettered the promises, restricted the efficacy of the great sacrifice, and chafed the anxious soul in its struggles for mercy. It showed the sinner there was no irresistible decree frowning him from the presence of his Saviour; that the only obstacle was in *himself*, and that the moment he renounced his hostile weapons and placed his dependence upon Christ, that moment he was justified and accepted of God.

These views of the Christian system, in connexion with an experimental enjoyment of the blessings they involve, inspired unwonted earnestness and energy in the enunciation of sacred truth, and caused the offer of a present and full salvation to be breathed through every sermon. These evangelical doctrines still distinguish the Methodist theology, and while they have contributed not a little to the success of *its own ministrations*, they have greatly modified the

sentiments of other denominations, and caused the pulpit generally to savour more of practical and saving truth, than of stale speculations about foreknowledge and absolute decrees. Indeed high Calvinism may now be regarded as obsolete, and the affectionate offers of mercy and earnest injunctions of duty, have happily taken its place in all evangelical churches. In such a change, we heartily rejoice, as an approximation to primitive Christianity and an auspicious omen to the general interests of religion.

The history of Methodism furnishes an additional illustration of a fact which all observant minds must have noticed—that vital and practical Christianity is the best conservative of sound doctrine. In the state of the church when Methodism took its rise we see an affecting proof of the insufficiency of legal and conventional measures to preserve the truth when experimental religion declines. The Church of England at that time though orthodox in her articles, homilies, and liturgy, was heterodox in the pulpit. Martyrs had bled for the truth, but the doctrines for which they suffered were disowned and denounced by their successors. The legal protection which acts of Parliament threw around the truth was ineffective, the oaths of ministers and bishops to hold fast and defend the truth were disregarded. As piety decayed, evangelical truth faded. It might be found in the tomes of the reformers, but was no longer uttered from the oracle. It had lost its vitality, and lay buried, fossilized, and forgotten amongst the relics of a bygone age. But when experimental religion revived, the truth revived; and as the former was diffused the latter was extended. The conversion of the Wesleys and Whitfield, reformed the theology of the nation; and the existence of vital religion, without Acts of Parliament and legal penalties, has conserved the truth to the present day.

In contemplating the history of Methodism we see an exhibition of what Christianity is competent to effect when it has no trammels to repress its elasticity — when it operates freely, and without either earthly helps or restraints. *It arose without worldly favour to shine upon it, or secular*

power to defend it, or wealth to sustain and diffuse it. It was born in poverty, and lived amid reproach and violent opposition. In the development of its own energies, it provided its own agents, produced its own resources, and without design found the best means to secure its internal prosperity and promote its external diffusion. It borrowed nothing from the kingdoms of this world, but it lacked nothing which heaven could bestow — ever active, but never exhausted; ever expending its resources yet multiplying its means; giving abundantly out of its own poverty, but receiving a hundred-fold in return; extending its territory abroad and yet augmenting its internal strength. It leaned on God, and his power was its defence; his providence its guide; and his spirit the perennial fountain whence it drew its supplies of vitality and energy.

We are not of those who think Methodism superannuated by age, or superseded by the altered state of society. We are not of those who are willing to part with its peculiarities, or think they can be dispensed with without detriment to Christianity. We are not of those who think the world has so far advanced, that Methodism may now submissively bow and retire before the majesty and pretensions of an episcopal hierarchy. We have no sympathy with those who can desert the humble temples where their Fathers worshipped, and seek under the fretted vault for a more formal service and more worldly respectability. Strange thoughts indeed, must revolutionize our sentiments and habits, before we can exchange the simple but manly piety, the heart-searching but often eloquent ministry, the voluntary but princely liberality, which distinguish Methodism, for the formalism, the maudlin theology, the compulsory exactions, and the Puseyism which deface the Establishment. Good doctrines there are in the Church, and good ministers too, with many alas of a different character whose poisonous errors and unsanctified lives are tolerated; and therefore the transit from Methodism to Churchism which sometimes occurs in this age, is a backward movement, a retrogression from right *principles*. It is to travel along the line which leads men

from Churchism to Puseyism, and from Puseyism to Popery. With clear views of truth, and a corresponding love for it, such a change cannot be voluntarily made. Methodism, as yet, has only commenced its noble work. It has yet a great mission to fulfil, in leavening the masses at home with the pure simple gospel of Christ, and in evangelizing the nations abroad, in hastening the day when the whole earth shall be filled with Jehovah's glory. When Wesley's triumphant spirit was departing he uttered with emphasis, "The best of all is, God is with us!" If this were merely a testimony, a multitude of facts declare its truth; but if a prediction, history has shown its fulfilment. God *has* been with us, and is with us still, and if faithful he will never leave us, but abide with us for ever; and the great work he has wrought by Methodism shall be continued and extended until all the ends of the earth shall see his salvation together, and the kingdoms of this world, become the kingdom of our God and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

CHAPTER II.

THE CAUSE AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DIVISION IN 1797. THE
ORIGIN OF THE NEW CONNEXION.

HAVING noticed, thus far, those facts in Methodism in which we have a *common* interest, we proceed to notice others in which we have a *special* interest, as a distinct branch of the great Methodist family.

We are members of the *Methodist New Connexion*. As a denomination, we have existed apart from the parent body for fifty years. There must be a cause for this. That cause does not exist in any diversity of doctrine, or ordinances, or mode of worship. In this respect we are one; and it is our joy to observe that on all the branches which have issued from the parent trunk, there is the same gracious fruit of holy doctrine, and Christian ordinances. In the plenary inspiration of the Holy Scriptures; in the Deity of Christ; the Personality and Godhead of the Holy Spirit; in the Fall of Man and the consequent depravity of our race; in the universal efficacy of the Atonement and the freeness of Divine mercy; in the necessity of repentance and a believing reliance upon Christ for salvation; in Justification by Faith to the utter exclusion of human merit; in the privilege of entire sanctification; in the necessity of holding fast faith and continuing in good works; in the immortality of the soul, the resurrection of the dead, the general judgement, and the distribution of rewards and punishments; in the eternal happiness of the righteous and the endless misery of the wicked; and in every other evangelical doctrine we are identical with the parent community. Indeed, the doctrines now stated, are deemed so vitally important that *they are registered* in our Connexional Deed, as well as

expressed in our rules, as the sentiments held and promulgated by the community. And never was there a period when these doctrines were more tenaciously held, and more highly appreciated than at the present time.

Notwithstanding this fact, there are some important differences betwixt us and the Wesleyan body; and these points of difference it is our duty calmly to state and maintain. We shall therefore give an impartial view of the case — not to engender strife: God forbid. Not to widen the breach by exciting animosities: that be far from us. We would speak the truth in love. What we have said already affords a proof of our love to Methodism, and may be viewed as a pledge of our desire for peace and harmony. But we have arrived at the era of our Jubilee, and feel bound by our gratitude to God for the privileges we enjoy, and a sense of self-respect, to commemorate the occasion by a review of our history, and by giving a reason for our denominational existence and our distinctive principles.

This is a duty too which we owe to the age we live in. The time has come when the human mind is awake to enquiry, and when the means of information on all subjects are accessible. The age of indolent and credulous reliance has passed away, and the period has arrived when institutions and principles must be investigated to their foundation, and whatever is based on mere assumption, on prejudice, or blind veneration for antiquity, must crumble into dust; and whatever is found inimical to truth, to rational liberty, or human weal, must be cast away as an idle and hurtful legend. *We* would not frown upon these hopeful aspirations of the human mind, or, for a moment, place the smallest impediment to its enquiries after truth. On the contrary we would encourage its investigations, and accelerate its emancipation from the last vestige of ignorance and serfdom. We would rejoice to see it enfranchised with all the intelligence and moral dignity which heaven has fitted it to enjoy — assured that light is the friend of truth, and truth the friend of freedom, and freedom the friend of religion, and religion the *essence* of harmony and happiness to man-

kind ; and the harmony and happiness of man subservient to the most exalted purpose of Jehovah in the creation of intelligent beings.

It has been a prevalent impression that our body originated in personal sympathy with Mr. Alexander Kilham, who, in 1796, was dismissed from the Wesleyan denomination ;—not for a blemish upon his moral character, but for the declaration of his sentiments respecting the government of the Connexion. But the impression is not correct. The Connexion did not originate in personal sympathy with any man, but in *principle*. Mr. Kilham was, no doubt, a man of irreproachable morals, sterling piety, and respectable talent, and he zealously advocated the cause of religious freedom ; but he was not *the* founder of the Connexion. At its formation he became one of its ministers, and was deservedly held in high estimation ; and in a subsequent part of this volume, a due tribute will be paid to his memory ; but the origin of the Connexion must be traced to a more exalted source than the influence of sympathy or the operation of mere human passions. The causes which led to the origin of our denomination existed in the scriptural views which great numbers entertained on the subject of church discipline and government : views which they felt it a duty to advocate and carry into effect.

The Methodist New Connexion was originated by a contest for the establishment of the following important and scriptural principles :

1. The right of the people to hold their public religious worship at such hours as were most convenient, without their being restricted to the mere intervals of the hours appointed for service in the Established Church.

2. The right of the people to receive the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper from the hands of their own ministers, and in their own places of worship.

3. The right of the people to a representation in the District Meetings, and in the Annual Conference, and thereby to participate in the government of the community and *in the appropriation* of its funds.

4. The right of the church to have a voice, through its local business meetings, in the reception and expulsion of members, the choice of local officers, and in the calling out of candidates for the ministry.

Not any of these privileges were originally enjoyed in the parent body; they were for years zealously contended for by the fathers and founders of our denomination, and when they could not be fully obtained, conscience compelled those noble-minded men to secede from the parent community and originate a distinct denomination in which such scriptural privileges could be freely enjoyed. It is not our intention here to enter upon an elaborate argument to establish the scriptural and rational foundation on which these rights are based, as this will be done in a subsequent chapter; but it is due to all parties to furnish a brief historical sketch of the circumstances which led to the secession in 1797.

We have already had occasion to show that as Methodism arose spontaneously from the revival of experimental religion, and was propagated without any previously constructed plan of government or mode of operation; its several distinguishing peculiarities were elicited by circumstances — the only rule of Wesley being, during the greater part of his life, to be guided by providence. Consequently the features of Methodism were gradually developed, its societies, its class meetings, its stewards, and its lay-ministry, arising out of unforeseen circumstances. This principle of gradual development — of adapting its economy to new circumstances, was certainly a law of its being, and was beheld constantly operating during a great part of its history. This principle ought to have continued in operation, both during the life of Mr. Wesley and since that event. But we regret to say this salutary principle, which had worked so well and elicited so many excellencies, and opened out so many means of usefulness and success to Wesley and his coadjutors, was arrested in its progress; and as the result Methodism, as a system, was prevented from arriving at that perfection it was destined to attain, while agitations were induced which shook the body to its centre; and at one time threatened

its dissolution. We have already noticed how often Mr. Wesley's prejudices and inclinations were crossed in the results of his own labours, in the measures and instrumentalities he was compelled by the force of circumstances to adopt from time to time, for carrying on the work which was growing around him; and for fulfilling the designs which Providence unexpectedly placed before him. Happy would it have been for Methodism, and happy for mankind at large, had he but been still more flexible in his prepossessions, more submissive to the indications of Providence in some matters *not* of trifling importance. The rigid attachment he cherished and inculcated in favour of the Establishment, and the tenacity with which he held his absolute power in the government of the Connexion, entailed upon the community a yoke grievous to be borne. In these respects we are bound to say, Mr. Wesley erred, and did not exhibit that regard to the monition of coming events which his usual sagacity, his delicate sense of propriety, and clear perception of the indications of Providence, might have led us to expect. With his strong prejudices in favour of the Church he could never endure the thought of a separation from it, and therefore his people generally were expected to attend Church service, and receive the sacrament, and have their children baptized at the Church, as a formal profession of their being members of the Establishment. Indeed it was a recognized principle that his preachers, not having been ordained by the imposition of hands, had no authority to administer the ordinances, and special regulations were laid down that the members should receive them at the hand of ministers belonging to the Establishment, and that there should be no preaching in church hours. Mr. Wesley's views on this subject were often expressed, and the following language is very decisive.

In answer to the question, "How should an assistant be qualified for his work?" he observes "By walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart: by understanding and loving the Church of England, and resolving not to separate from it; let this be well observed. I fear *when Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them.*"

It is again asked "Are we not, unawares, by little and little, sliding into a separation from the Church?" "O use every means to prevent this! 1. Exhort all our people to keep close to the Church and sacrament. 2. Warn them against all niceness in hearing — a prevailing evil. 3. Warn them also against despising the prayers of the Church. 4. Against calling our society the Church. 5. Against calling our preachers ministers, our houses meeting-houses — call them plain preaching-houses or chapels. 6. Do not license them as Dissenters; do not license yourself till you are constrained; and then, not as a Dissenter, but as a Methodist." It is further asked, "But are we not Dissenters?" and the answer is given: — "No. Although we call sinners to repentance in all places of God's dominion: and although we frequently use extemporary prayer, and unite together in a religious society; yet we are not dissenters in the only sense which our law acknowledges, namely, those who renounce the service of the Church. — We do not: we dare not separate from it. We are not seceders, nor do we bear any resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite principles. The seceders laid the very foundation of their work in judging and condemning others. We laid the foundation of our work in judging and condemning ourselves. They begin everywhere with showing their hearers how fallen the Church and ministers are. We begin everywhere with showing our hearers how fallen they are themselves. What they do in America, or what their ministers say, is nothing to us. We will keep in the good old way. And never let us make light of going to Church, either in word or deed."*

In a sermon preached only about a year and ten months before his death, speaking of the proper functions of his preachers he says, "We received them wholly and solely to preach; not to administer sacraments. And those who imagine these offices to be inseparably joined, are totally ignorant of the constitution of the whole Jewish as well as Christian church. Neither the Romish, the English, nor

**Large Minutes for 1770.*

the Presbyterian Churches, ever accounted them so." As these sentiments were uttered so near to the time of his dissolution, they may be regarded as his final views on this question.

Those who have regarded Methodism as being *now* what it formerly was, will read the above extracts with a degree of surprise. Nor were such sentiments universally approved even during Mr. Wesley's life. Deep as was the reverence cherished towards Mr. Wesley, and implicit as the submission generally yielded to his judgement and authority, discontent and dissatisfaction were manifest in many places, and the church question was extensively canvassed as Methodism advanced. Very often indeed the above-named injunctions and restrictions wounded the consciences of pious people, especially when placed with the only alternative of either receiving the memorials of the Saviour's broken body from the polluted hands of an unconverted minister, or neglecting a positive command. Yet it is remarkable that Mr. Wesley made no provision for a change in this respect, only making an exception in favour of City-road Chapel in London, with a few other places specially named, and such cases as when a minister of the Establishment was notoriously wicked or preached Arian sentiments. In such instances the sacrament might be administered to the people, either by himself, his brother, or some few ministers who had been ordained for the purpose.

That this great and good man, should see himself at the head of seventy-thousand people as members of his societies, supplied with regular chapels and means of grace; and yet expect them always to remain members of the Establishment, and continue to receive the sacrament from the ministers of the Church, when they had three hundred regular ministers of their own; or should expect through future ages the three hundred preachers, with the contrary example of the American preachers before them, to degrade themselves by acknowledging the subaltern and inferior station of *teachers*, when they were in fact regular ministers and knew they were such; and refuse to administer the

sacraments to the people of their spiritual charge when they knew they were as competent to do this as to preach the gospel—is indeed a problem difficult to solve. How a mind so acute in observation, so penetrating and far-seeing, and so logical in reasoning, could thus effectually impose upon itself, is a phenomenon in the history of mind. But if Mr. Wesley did foresee a change, and yet made no provision for the crisis, it is perhaps equally marvellous. Yet so it was. He retained his personal predilections for the Church, and if he did anticipate, in the distance, a separation from it, he left his people without instructions, without preparation, and without means for passing through the trying transition. Perhaps he had a secret confidence that the Providence of God would guide and protect the community through the ordeal when it arrived. But Providence has not engaged to save either men or communities from the results of their own imprudence or prejudice, and the Connexion was thrown into most convulsive and dangerous throes, as the result of Mr. Wesley's Church predilections and lack of prudence in this matter.

Another error committed by the venerable founder of Methodism was his tenacious hold of that absolute power which had naturally fallen into his hands, and especially his transfer of that power by deed of settlement to the ministers of the body after his death.

The power of Mr. Wesley was absolute, but it fell into his hands unsought and undesired. It was exercised by him with affection and solely for the best interests of mankind; and retained from the same motive. He was the *Father* of the community, and was necessitated for a time to be its sole director and governor; but we are of opinion that however proper it was for him to exercise that absolute power during the infancy of the Connexion, yet when surrounded by churches which had grown to maturity, and assisted by ministers and laymen of acknowledged wisdom, integrity, and piety, whose existence and happiness like his own, were bound up with the prosperity of Methodism, it would have been *more conformable to the example of the apostles and*

the dictates of sound reason, to have gradually, relaxed his hold of the reins and admitted others to a participation of the same, and finally to have framed a liberal constitution, defining the prerogatives of the ministry and the privileges of the people, securing both by suitable regulations and wholesome laws. Mr. Wesley's mind was well qualified for this, but he did it not. He retained his own absolute power until death ; and what was a greater error, instead of framing for the community a liberal constitution, he transferred by legal settlement his own extensive power to the preachers, and made that *law*, which before was only *custom*, and custom arising from the peculiar relation in which he stood. He made those his successors in absolute power who could not possibly be his successors in paternal relation and influence.

Mr. Wesley's power extended to both the greatest and the smallest matters of government and was absolute in all. He received members and expelled them. He appointed officers and removed them. He admitted preachers and dismissed them ; and when some complaints of his absolute authority were made, he still retained it, and justified its retention. With his usual frankness and simplicity he published the reasons which induced him to do this, and as he therein describes both the manner in which he acquired his power, and the purposes for which he continued to hold it, we give a quotation from his own words, stated in the form of question and answer.

“ Count Zinzendorf loved to keep all things close : I love to do all things openly. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

“ In November, 1738, two or three persons who desired to flee from the wrath to come, and then a few more, came to me in London, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, ‘ If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can.’ More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The case was afterwards the same at Bristol, *Kingswood*, *Newcastle*, and many other parts of England,

Scotland, and Ireland. It may be observed, the desire was on their part, not mine. My desire was, to live and die in retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God. ●

“ Here commenced my power ; namely a power to appoint when, and where, and how they should meet ; and to remove those whose lives showed that they ‘ had not a desire to flee from the wrath to come.’ And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve hundred or twelve thousand.

“ In a few days some of them said, ‘ Sir, we will not sit under you for nothing ; we will subscribe quarterly.’ I said, ‘ I will have nothing ; for I want nothing. My Fellowship supplies me with all I want.’ One replied, ‘ Nay, but you want one hundred and fifteen pounds to pay for the lease of the Foundry, and likewise a large sum of money to put it into repair.’ On this consideration, I suffered them to subscribe. And when the society met, I asked who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful ?’ One said, ‘ I will do it, and keep the account for you.’ So here was the first Steward. Afterwards, I desired one or two more to help me, as stewards, and, in process of time, a great number.

“ Let it be remarked, it was I myself, not the people, who chose these stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work wherein he was to help me, as long as I desired. And herein I began to exercise another sort of power ; viz., that of appointing and removing stewards.

“ After sometime a young man, named Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards ; and then a third, Thomas Westall. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct. Observe : these likewise desired me, not I them. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my power, to appoint each of these when, and where, and how to labour ; that is, while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased ; as I had

also, to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint when, and where, and how each should help me; and to tell any, (if I saw cause) ‘I do not desire your help any longer.’ On these terms, and no other, we joined at first: on these we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true, ‘my reward is with the Lord;’ but at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care; and often a burden I scarce know how to bear.

“In 1744 I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increased, so that it was not convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and they only met me at London, or elsewhere: till at length I gave a general permission, which I afterwards saw cause to retract.

“Observe: I myself sent for these of my own free choice. And I sent for them to advise, not govern, me. Neither did I at any time divest myself of any part of the power above described, which the providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine.

“What is that power? It is a power of admitting into, and excluding from, the societies under my care; of choosing and removing stewards; of receiving or not receiving helpers; of appointing them where and how to help me, and of desiring any of them to confer with me when I see good. And as it was merely in obedience to the Providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, which I never sought; so it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day.

“‘But several gentlemen are offended at your having so much power. I did not seek any part of it. But when it *was come unawares*, not daring to bury that talent, I used

it to the best of my judgement. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now bear it as my burden ; the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not lay it down.

“ But if you can tell me any one, or any five men, to whom I may transfer this burden, who can and will do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both them and you.

“ But some of our helpers say, ‘ This is shackling free-born Englishmen ;’ and demand a free Conference, that is, a meeting of all the preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer, It is possible, after my death, something of this kind may take place ; but not while I live. To me the preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to serve me as sons in the gospel ; but they are not thus engaged to any man or number of men beside. To me the people in general will submit ; but they will not thus submit to any other.

“ It is nonsense, then, to call my using this power, ‘ shackling free-born Englishmen.’ None needs to submit to it unless he will ; so that there is no shackling in the case. Every preacher and every member may leave me when he pleases. But while he chooses to stay, it is on the same terms that he joined me at first.

“ ‘ But this is making yourself a Pope.’ This carries no face of truth. The Pope affirms that every Christian must do all he bids, and believe all he says under pain of damnation. I never affirmed anything that bears any the most distant resemblance to this. All I affirm is, the preachers who chose to labour with me, choose to serve me as sons in the Gospel. And the people who chose to be under my care, choose to be so on the same terms they were at first.

“ Therefore all talk of this kind is highly injurious to me, who bear the burden merely for your sake. And it is exceedingly mischievous to the people, tending to confound their understanding, and to fill their hearts with evil surmises and unkind tempers towards me ; to whom they really owe more, for taking this load upon me, for exercising this very power, *for shackling myself in this manner, than for all my preaching put together ; because preaching twice*

or thrice a day is no burden to me at all ; but the care of all the preachers and all the people is a burden indeed !”

These views were recorded in 1789, fifty years after the origin of Methodism and only two prior to Mr. Wesley's death. This is indeed altogether a remarkable passage, and while transparent with the simplicity, integrity, and goodness of his heart, reveals very imperfect and erroneous views of human rights. Indeed, the principles here laid down, if viewed abstractedly, are the quintessence of despotism. The assumption that because he had originated the body he had a title to govern it *absolutely*, and continue that government through life, is to treat all his members as infant children, however matured in wisdom, intelligence, and holiness they might be, and to act the very reverse to what the apostles had done, though vested with an authority which no one since can possess, and endowed with gifts to which none can pretend. In fact there never was a church on earth, the papal body excepted, nor a political government on earth, except those execrated by all men for their oppression, which has asserted such despotic principles as those maintained in the language of Mr. Wesley. At the same time we are perfectly satisfied they resulted from error of judgement, and by no means from a love of power for its own sake, and the whole history of Mr. Wesley's proceedings shows that he exercised his power with the greatest meekness and moderation, seeking nothing but the glory of God and the good of mankind.

The power which Mr. Wesley held himself, he transferred by legal settlement to others. The necessity of a deed of settlement was felt in order to give the Connexion a *legal* existence ; but the provisions of the deed were quite as capable of a liberal, as of a despotic character. Such a document might have recognized the rights of the people as well as those of the ministry. Indeed the necessity for such a document afforded a fitting opportunity for giving to Methodism a liberal constitution, like that enjoyed by Presbyterian, and other churches ; a constitution in which *the people should* have such a participation, as the Scrip-

tures require, in the government and management of the Church. Yet this opportunity was not embraced for such a purpose, but as we have stated, made the occasion for consolidating and legalizing ministerial power to the exclusion of the just rights of the people. By the Deed of Settlement the Annual Conference was made to consist of one hundred ministers, who alone were the legal representatives of the Connexion, to whom alone the functions of general government were consigned, while the authority and management of the circuits, separately, was left in the hands of the preachers as it had been heretofore. A general idea of this authority and power, may be gathered from the statement of Mr. Wesley previously quoted.

In reference then to the provisions of this legal deed, we cannot claim for Mr. Wesley that Divine guidance which had so remarkably distinguished many of his other proceedings. Providence can never be the author of that which is not perfectly equitable; and to transfer to others, by legal settlement, the enormous and irresponsible powers which he, as father of the community, had claimed and exercised, was neither in accordance with proper views of Scripture, nor the principles of a wise and just administration. It is however, due to Mr. Wesley, to observe that this document was prepared when he had reached the advanced age of eighty-one; and it is not improbable that some of its peculiar provisions were adopted rather by his consent than by his dictation.

The Poll Deed is designated "A Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the *People* called Methodists." This is a singular designation, and a most inappropriate one. We do not wish to give offence when we say, that the proper designation would have been "A Declaration and Establishment of the Conference of the *Preachers*," (not the *people*) "called Methodists." Indeed Dr. Whitehead, Mr. Wesley's biographer, remarks, the title of the Deed is "most incongruous," adding, "It is well known that the *people* called Methodists, never held a conference since Methodism existed. The conference is an assembly of *itinerant preachers*

only, (except two or three clergymen,) and its members are not assembled by any authority derived from the people. When sitting, it exercises powers which are neither derived from the people nor under any control by them. It elects members into its own body, or excludes them at pleasure; it makes regulations and laws, not only for itinerant preachers, but for all ranks and orders of persons in the societies; and while these things are transacted, neither local preachers, trustees of chapels, stewards, leaders, or any of the people, have a single voice, or a single representative in the assembly: the people have no check, no balance of power, against any regulation or law the Conference may choose to decree. It is difficult to conceive why this assembly of a few preachers was called '*the Conference of the People called Methodists*,' unless it was to give the people a hint that they ought to have some representatives in an assembly where laws are made by which they as Methodists are to be governed."

Such are the pointed, sensible, and candid remarks of Dr. Whitehead, himself a Wesleyan Methodist preacher. His life of Wesley is considered the best and most impartial that has been written, and the above quotation is taken from the genuine edition in two volumes, published in London. It is a curious fact that a spurious and mutilated edition was published shortly after with Dr. Whitehead's name on the title page, but which omitted *all the passages* that were objectionable to Dr. Coke and those in power at that time.

The above passage clearly shows what Dr. Whitehead thought of those provisions of the Poll Deed which invested the preachers with irresponsible power, and he was not alone in his views. Not a few of the preachers as well as the people were deeply dissatisfied with those provisions, and frequently expressed their dissatisfaction during Mr. Wesley's lifetime. It is probable, indeed, that the venerable founder of Methodism subsequently saw reason to apprehend, from statements made to him, that he had invested his successors with too large a share of unqualified and uncontrollable authority, at least over their brethren in the ministry, but the *document* being legalized, it was too late to effect an altera-

tion. He therefore wrote a letter solemnly charging the legal Conference against any abuse of their powers. The following is a copy of this letter, dated April 7th, 1785.

“ My dear Brethren, — Some of our travelling preachers have expressed a fear that after my decease, you would exclude them, either from preaching in connexion with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you. I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Declaration to assume any superiority over your brethren: but let all things go on among those itinerants who choose to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit. In particular I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the preachers, in choosing children for *Kingswood School*, in disposing of the yearly contribution and the preacher's fund, or any other public money: but do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.—JOHN WESLEY.”

This letter had been committed to the care of Mr. Bradford who travelled with Mr. Wesley, and was produced and read at the first Conference after his death, when the members of that assembly unanimously resolved to carry out the intentions of its venerable author. In conformity with this purpose they have always continued to admit a large number of their brethren in the ministry to a seat in the Conference and to unite in their deliberations and determinations; although no votes except the hundred are of any legal value, and all others could be easily set aside if judged expedient. It is to be observed however, that as Mr. Wesley's letter makes no allusion to the rights of the people, the people have never been allowed to send any representatives to Conference, although wealthy laymen, of late years, have been admitted to a participation in several departments of business, and annually approach the very doors of Confer-

ence, into which it is probable they will ere long have the privilege of admission. But the modifications of Methodism, and the probability of yet further important changes in its economy and management we shall have occasion to notice hereafter.

Soon after Mr. Wesley's death, there was an expectation prevalent among the Methodists, in many parts of the kingdom, that alterations would be effected in reference to the objectionable points which have been adduced. Sundry meetings were held, and petitions forwarded, requesting the Conference to concede to the people the privileges of having religious worship in church-hours, of receiving the sacrament from the hands of their own ministers, of being represented by the admission of delegates into district meetings and Conference, of having a voice in the reception and expulsion of members, in the election of church-officers, and in the recommendation of preachers for the itinerancy. In fact not less than fifty pamphlets and circular letters on these topics were issued within the period of a few years, and though a number of these were in favour of adherence to the Church, yet all were in favour of such modifications being made as should concede some share of power to the laity; and while a few ambitious juntos were desirous that that power should be vested chiefly in the trustees, the majority strongly advocated such a constitution as should give the *people* a free voice in the general government of the Connexion, and in the local management of the circuits respectively.

At the first Conference after Mr. Wesley's death a multitude of letters and petitions were sent by the societies in every part of the kingdom, expressive of their views and sentiments in relation to the topics so generally discussed; but it is a singular fact (which not until some time afterwards was made public,) that all or nearly all these memorials were burnt without being opened. The best construction which can be put upon this unceremonious treatment of the societies, is that the Conference was embarrassed by the difficulties of its position, and not having any plan matured by which

conflicting opinions could be satisfactorily met, resolved to postpone the consideration of any such plan for the time being, and therefore disposed of all communications by destroying them. This is the more probable from the resolution the Conference adopted, which combines with expressions of the deepest veneration for Mr. Wesley's memory, a vague and general determination "to take up and pursue the plan their aged father had left them, exactly in the manner he had done." The ambiguity of this resolution produced, apparently, a temporary satisfaction amongst all parties. As interpreted by the Church party it seemed to express adherence to the Establishment. As interpreted by those inclined to dissent and freedom it seemed to admit the operation of that progressive and expansive principle which had guided Mr. Wesley in general, and gradually built up the system of Methodism into a powerful community; and the continued operation of this principle was expected to work out for Methodism all the results necessary for its complete freedom in government, and its independence as a distinct denomination, in the full enjoyment of its own ordinances and privileges. Nor were these different views of the resolution concealed, but expressed by the preachers during the discussions in Conference.

This tranquillity however, as might be expected, was soon disturbed. When some ministers assumed their right to administer the Lord's supper to the people, the high Church party took the alarm and published inflammatory tracts and circulars against them. It was an occasion of this kind which brought publicly into the field of controversy Mr. Alexander Kilham, then a very acceptable minister of about seven years' standing, labouring in the Newcastle circuit. He issued a publication in reply to a virulent attack which one Mr. Grey had made on the conduct of Mr. Cownley for having presumed to administer the Lord's supper to some members of the Newcastle society, who had desired that ordinance at his hands. It should be observed, that although the ordinance had been administered by him only to such as expressly desired it, and to avoid giving offence to the Church party,

was administered not in the Chapel at Newcastle, but in a small chapel at Byker, about two miles distant, notwithstanding this precaution, three of the class leaders in Newcastle, and about twenty members, left the society; and this Mr. Grey, one of the seceders, addressed to Mr. Cownley the letter in question, and subsequently published the case and the correspondence which had passed between them on the subject. Mr. Kilham published a spirited reply, in which he not only defended the character of the venerable Cownley, but discussed the general question in relation to the sacraments and the position of the Methodist body in respect to the Church, maintaining of course the right of the preachers to administer the sacraments and of the people to receive them at their hand.

Although this publication was entitled "An address to the Members and Friends of the Newcastle Society," yet as it was one of the first which had been issued on the liberal side of the question, it obtained an extensive circulation and excited general attention. Mr. Kilham received from several of his brethren of high standing in the ministry, assurances of sympathy with his sentiments, and approval of what he had done to subserve the cause of truth and freedom. Mr. T. Taylor, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, says, "I have seen your pamphlet, and like it well — send me a hundred. It bears my thoughts, and almost some of my expressions." Mr. Pawson, one of the oldest preachers in the Connexion addressed the following letter to Mr. Kilham.

"Halifax, April 7, 1792.

"My dear Brother, — I am much obliged to you for your kind and affectionate letter, and for the books which you sent me. They came when I was just setting out for Manchester, to meet with the committee of that district, so that I took some of them along with me. The brethren approved of them very much, and I will take care to send them to all the neighbouring circuits in a few days, please God all is well with me.

"It seems the high Church party are of the same spirit *everywhere*. *Every one* must be subject to their will, and act

as they do, or there is no peace to be expected. This same Mr. Grey seems wonderfully ready to quote Mr. Wesley when on his own side of the question: but on the other side, Mr. Wesley's authority weighs with him not so much as a single grain of sand. He may think what he will, but it seems to me very melancholy indeed to see an old man, after about forty years' standing in the Church of God, so entirely under the power of his own spirit and temper, and such an utter stranger to meekness, gentleness, and the whole mind of Christ. I do not know him, but be he who he will, or what he will, his own letters bear full testimony against him as a Christian, and show him to be very ignorant, yet extremely positive. A furious hot-headed bigot to what he calls the Church, and utterly devoid of all charity for those who differ from him, although they have the whole Bible on their side. Wretched bigotry! O that it was for ever banished from the face of the earth! I doubt not but Mr. Cowley will have wisdom and grace enough to enable him to bear such unkind and unchristian treatment. He has been labouring to do this man and his fellows good for many years, but he has not succeeded to his wishes; far from it. Yet his reward is from the Lord nevertheless.

“I hope the time is now drawing near when our people will be brought out of Egypt, and to the full enjoyment of all the privileges and blessings of the gospel. The Lord hasten the happy day!

“You will find it highly necessary to act in this business with great prudence, gentleness, humility, and love. This is your comfort: you are engaged in the cause of God, and he will stand by you, and I trust make you more than conqueror.

“All who met at Manchester seemed on your side—more especially Messrs. Thomas and Henry Taylor, Mr. Bradburn, Mr. Clark, and Mr. Snowden; so that I hope at the next Conference the matter will be established.

“We have had the sacrament many times in some places in this circuit, and the Lord has owned and blessed them very much indeed! Brother Entwistle joins me in kindest

love to yourself, Mr. Cownley, Mr. Gualter, and all friends. May the God of peace and love be powerfully present with you. — I am, your affectionate brother, J. PAWSON.”

Mr. Bradburn wrote on the same subject and expressed similar views to those maintained by Mr. Kilham. Also, Mr. T. Taylor himself published a pamphlet in defence of liberty and the right of the people to receive the sacraments at the hands of their own ministers. In a letter sent with a copy of his pamphlet to Mr. Kilham he thus expressed himself :

“ Liverpool, 23rd June, 1792.

“ My dear Brother, — I am glad at what passed at your district meeting. I could have been glad if you should go to Conference. Mr. Mather is raising all the forces he can to overturn common sense, scripture, and experience. Thompson has veered about again ; so that I suppose there will be a warm contest at the Conference.

“ In my pamphlet, I am constrained to own that Mr. Wesley was fallible. I doubt that will be high treason, and that I shall be thought a disaffected person to Mr. Wesley. I knew him well for more than thirty years. I was in the cabinet for some time. I esteemed him highly. I knew him to be a great man ; but I knew he was fallible : as such, the impertinent appeals to what he has said, have obliged me to appeal to what he did ; and if there be any contradiction, the crime of divulging must lie upon such as rest their cause upon what Mr. Wesley hath said, rather than upon what the bible hath said. In matters of such importance as we plead for, nothing will satisfy me short of ‘ Thus saith the Lord.’ An apostle was once withstood to the face, because he was to be blamed. I love the memory of Mr. Wesley, but I must love the truth better, and in that consideration must know no man after the flesh.

“ I have administered the Lord’s supper twice here, and God has crowned the ordinance each time. Two sent notes of thanksgiving the last time for a sense of pardon ; and I don’t think any waited in vain. I permitted serious persons to be present each time, who did not communicate. I believe it was attended with good.

“ But nothing will move our bigots. I believe they use every means to keep the people away. They are encouraged by some preachers, and are made to believe that all will turn in their favour at the Conference, and that all I have done will meet with a fatal overthrow. How that will be, the event must prove. I wish every preacher to count the cost, and see the cause is right before he engages in it, and then to remain unshaken. I am, my dear brother, Your's affectionately, T. TAYLOR.”

It is a fact we record with pain and sorrow for human infirmity, that Mr. Kilham was tried and censured at the ensuing Conference for having issued the publication referred to — a publication which defended the character of an aged minister in the discharge of his sacred duties, which maintained the people's rights and scriptural privileges against boisterous intolerance and supercilious bigotry — a publication which was an honour to him, and for which he ought to have received the thanks of the Conference instead of its censure. The injustice of this censure was rendered the more obvious by the Conference passing by the publications of Messrs. Taylor and Bradburn which contained expressions acknowledged to be more worthy of censure than those employed by Mr. Kilham. The censure against him, however, was not unanimous. A number of influential preachers spoke openly in the Conference in favour of the publication, and boldly maintained the truth of its sentiments. Mr. Moore, especially, advocated the cause of Mr. Kilham, and called upon the Conference to act consistently and uprightly, and if they condemned Mr. Kilham's pamphlet, to exercise impartiality by condemning all the pamphlets, sermons, and circular letters which had been issued on both sides of the question, not excepting even Dr. Coke's Ordination Sermon, delivered in America. It was replied by one of the principal speakers (Mr. Thompson,) that both Mr. Bradburn and Mr. Taylor should be tried and their pamphlets condemned as well as Mr. Kilham's: but this declaration was never fulfilled. It is difficult, if not impossible, to assign any reason for this omission,

except the apprehension that the trial of such influential characters might have induced a result which would have neutralized or perhaps reversed the censure already passed upon Mr. Kilham's pamphlet.

At this Conference the letters, petitions and communications from the people on the subjects then so generally canvassed in the Methodistic community were almost as numerous as they had been the preceding year, but they were disposed of in a similar manner — destroyed without having been read. The sacramental question was disposed of by the Conference by Lot, and the circumstance is recorded in the following minute :

“ After debating the subject time after time, we were greatly divided in sentiment. In short, we knew not what to do, that peace and union might be preserved. At last one of the senior brethren (Mr. Pawson) proposed that we should commit the matter to God by putting the question to the lot, considering that the Oracles of God declare, that ‘the Lot causeth contentions to cease, and parteth between the mighty:’ And again that ‘the Lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord:’ And considering also that we have the example of the Apostles themselves, in a matter which we thought, all things considered, of less importance.

“ We accordingly prepared the lots; and four of us prayed. God was surely then present, yea, his glory filled the room. Almost all the preachers were in tears, and, as they afterwards confessed, felt an undoubted assurance that God himself would decide. Mr. Adam Clarke was then called on to draw the lot, which was, ‘You shall not administer the Sacrament the ensuing year.’ All were satisfied. All submitted. All was peace. Every countenance seemed to testify that every heart said, ‘It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.’ A minute was then formed according to the previous explanation of the lot, that the sacrament should not be administered in our Connexion, for the ensuing year, except in London.”

It was true, no doubt, that “*all submitted,*” but it could

not be safely affirmed that "*all were satisfied.*" The impartial reader will think with us, that seeing the duty devolving upon God's ambassadors to administer, and upon God's people to receive, the sacramental memorials of the Saviour's death, is plainly revealed and commanded, it was not scriptural to decide the case by Lot; and seeing the ordinance had already been administered in a number of places to the comfort and satisfaction of the members, it was a backward movement — a movement neither wise nor just, to withdraw this privilege from them, and in many cases throw them upon the necessity of either neglecting a sacred duty, or submitting to the annoyance of communicating with an ungodly Clergyman. Such were the views of Mr. Kilham and others at the time, and therefore it was not in strict accordance with truth to aver that "*all were satisfied*" with the decision by Lot. While, therefore, we feel that the difficulties of the case rendered the position of the Conference extremely embarrassing, and great charity ought to influence our judgement of their proceedings, yet we are satisfied that a faithful adherence to plainly revealed duty would have been more rational, and certainly more conducive to the interests of truth. Besides, the fact of the Conference regarding its decision as *Divine* in this instance, would cause many to regard its subsequent reversion as a *human* determination, and thus perpetuate their difficulties and embarrassments. The decision of the Lot did not meet the wishes of the people. Their deprivation of a Christian privilege was felt to be a grievous hardship; and each month furnished abundant proof that a change must ere long be effected or disruption would inevitably ensue.

The discussions respecting the sacrament were more or less mixed up with the other questions we have named, and as time advanced the interest in these questions became deepened. The summary manner too in which the Conference had treated the petitions and memorials of the people, increased the desire for a living representation by the introduction of lay-delegates into the District Meetings and Conference.

At this Conference (1792) Mr. Kilham was appointed to

labour in Aberdeen. In this locality he had an ample opportunity of observing the constitution and operations of the Presbyterian Church, in its Sessions, Presbyteries, Synods, and Assemblies: and as laymen are associated with ministers in all these meetings, it occurred to him that this rational and scriptural mode of church government strikingly contrasted with what obtained in his own denomination, and he felt it a sacred duty to suggest the adoption of this just and equitable principle of ministerial and lay co-operation in every department of the Methodistic economy. He therefore published a circular letter, under the signature of "Trueman and Freeman," and sent it to the most influential persons throughout the Connexion. In this letter he insists upon the necessity of a living representation of the people, by the sending of lay-delegates freely chosen; and, in showing the inefficiency of letters and memorials, notices the fact that such documents, on the motion of a certain preacher, had been destroyed without examination. In the name of the people he puts the question "Would it not be proper for us to have some concern in managing such matters as materially affect ourselves?" He then proposes that the appointment of stewards, leaders, local preachers, and the recommendation of preachers to travel, should be done, not by the sole authority of ministers, but by a majority at meetings composed of the preachers and officers in the societies or circuits. He adds;

"Would it not be proper for every circuit, or every district, to be represented in Conference by a delegate of its own choosing? He could carry in the collections, see how the monies are expended, and would be able to give a particular account of our money matters, to such of our friends who might wish to be informed. These delegates should be present when the preachers' characters are examined, and when they are stationed for their circuits. They would furnish the Conference with much useful information, and prevent many improper appointments, and see that our funds are rightly managed. Honesty will never shrink from responsibility."

He concludes his letter with the following remarks:

“ If the preachers had paid a proper degree of attention to your addresses last year, we should not have troubled you with these observations. We have written freely, without the least design of doing any harm to the cause. On the contrary, we have been influenced by a desire of doing good. If success should attend our endeavours, God shall have the praise ; but if not, we shall at least have the testimony of our conscience, that our attempt was well meant. We have now done our part towards the reform of the above mentioned abuses. Do you yours. Enlighten the people. Read or lend this letter to as many of them as you possibly can, and do not suffer yourselves to be discouraged by timorous or interested men. In so doing, you will contribute to the prosperity of Methodism, and do honour to God.”

What effect resulted from this circular does not appear, but at the next Conference the decision of the Lot respecting the Sacrament was set aside and the following resolution adopted by a large majority :

“ That the Sacrament of the Lord’s Supper shall not be administered by the preachers in any part of our Connexion, except where the whole society is unanimous for it, and *will not be contented without it* ; and, in even those few exempt societies, it shall be administered, as far as practicable, in the evening only, and according to the form of the Church of England.”

This resolution, restrictive though it be, and burdened with conditions such as were not compatible with spiritual freedom, was however much preferable to the decision of the former Conference, and opened the way for that holy ordinance to be administered in some places. But, as time passed on, events continued to show the great and threatening difficulties into which both the Conference and the Connexion in general were cast by the unwise policy of Mr. Wesley in trammelling the body with church-adherence and despotic rule.

The ensuing Conference (1794) was held at Bristol, and here the contest became so violent that the Connexion was almost threatened with dissolution. Deputations from

Trustees assembled with a determination to compel the carrying out of Mr. Wesley's plan of rigid adherence to the Church, requiring that there should be no preaching in Church hours, and no sacrament administered but by Church ministers ; while on the other hand memorials were sent from societies to Conference praying that they might be permitted to have the Ordinance in their own chapels and from the hands of their own ministers, and enjoy the privilege of worshipping God according to the dictates of their own consciences. The Conference was exceedingly embarrassed, but finally a decision was adopted somewhat more favourable to the privileges of the people than the one of the preceding year. Instead of requiring complete unanimity it was determined "That the Lord's supper shall not be administered in future, where the union and concord of the society can be preserved without it."

As might be expected from former manifestations of intolerance this resolution, though so carefully qualified, did not satisfy those trustees who were bigotted in their attachment to the Church and resolved to force, if possible, all others to a compliance with their own sentiments. It ought to be here observed that this intolerance was all on one side. The liberal party never wished to interfere with the views of others ; all they sought or desired from the first was simply the privilege of worshipping God themselves according to the dictates of their own consciences, leaving the Church party at perfect liberty to follow their own course ; but the Church adherents resolved to make their own rule the measure for every man's conscience. The plain expression of their conduct was, "we insist that all shall conform to our prejudices ; we will neither hold worship in Church hours in our chapels nor shall any others ; we will neither receive the sacrament in any place but the Church, nor from any hands but those of Church ministers ; nor shall any in the Methodist denomination receive it in any other manner."

As a proof of the high-tide of feeling raised by these disputes, it may be stated that in the town of Bristol where the Conference was held there were three chapels,—the

trustees of two of these chapels, Broadmead and Guinea-street, were of the Church party, and the trustees of the other, Portland-street, were of opposite views; on the Conference Sunday Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore administered the ordinance in Portland-street chapel, and in consequence of this Mr. Moore was prohibited from preaching in either of the other chapels; while on the other side, the Portland-street trustees exercised an unseemly retaliation upon Mr. Benson who had identified himself with the Church party, by forbidding him to preach in their chapel. At this time a division took place in the Bristol society, when three hundred members left, headed by Mr. Benson, Mr. Rodda, and Mr. Vasey, and the trustees of the two chapels previously named.

These events at Bristol soon became known through the Connexion and produced a very powerful excitement. This controversy originated a new question respecting the power of trustees; namely—in cases where societies desired to have the the Lord's supper, or any other privilege which the preachers were willing to grant, were trustees empowered to hinder the same from being enjoyed in the chapels? The trustees of the Church party maintained that they had this power, and were supported by Messrs. Mather, Benson, Thompson, and others, while Dr. Coke, and Messrs. Bradburn, Pawson, Moore, Crowther, Kilham, &c., took the opposite side, and advocated the unfettered right of the people to have the sacraments if they wished it, both in their own chapels and at the hands of their own ministers.

It is probable that the anxiety manifested by some to continue in adherence to the Church, sprang from an expectation that at no distant period the Methodist community would be incorporated with the Establishment, and the preachers who chose to remain, would, on receiving episcopal ordination, be recognized as its authorized ministers. How many of the preachers, who contended for church adherence entertained this expectation we have no certain data by which to determine, but it is quite evident that this hope was entertained by Mr. Thompson, one of the leading preachers in the Connexion, as appears from his negotiation with Mr.

William Pitt, the minister of state. He wrote to this official personage, "1st. Enquiring whether Mr. Pitt, &c., wished the Methodists to give a fuller and stronger proof of attachment to the government than they had done? 2nd. *To desire him and his colleagues to bring about a closer union between the Methodists and the Church.* 3rd. To desire Mr. Pitt to aid the preachers against the rebellious trustees in London respecting the new chapel." This important fact is stated by Mr. Crowther, one of the leading preachers, in his letter to Mr. Kilham, dated January 12th, 1794. The meaning of the two first enquiries is so transparent that no man can be mistaken as to Mr. Thompson's object, in his correspondence with Mr Pitt.

In this controversy Mr. Kilham contended not only for liberty respecting the sacraments, but for the introduction of other important privileges, namely the right of lay-delegation; and this object appeared at one time to be gaining ground among those preachers who were united with him in opposing the assumed prerogatives of the trustees. In fact at that period, these preachers stood between the people and the intolerant trustees, who seemed resolved to use their power to repress the spirit of the people and perpetuate their bondage to the Establishment. Some of the most eminent ministers in the Connexion held correspondence with Mr. Kilham, expressing their sympathy with his views, and their thorough conviction that the government of Methodism must be remodelled, and such a constitution be adopted as would unite the people with the ministers in the government and administration. Indeed at the close of the preceding year (December 12th, 1793,) Mr. Bradburn wrote to Mr. Kilham an affectionate but confidential letter, in which he says:— "We must have a Methodist constitution or plan of discipline explained, and we shall in due time."

Mr. Pawson, in January 1795, published a pamphlet in which there are some strong expressions in favour of the people's liberty. Addressing the members in general he says, —

"You have not only built our chapels, but you bear every

burden of a temporal kind. Why then should you be excluded from having a proper share in the government, or at least in the regulation of the church of God? Can a few trustees be your representatives? Are your consciences to be wholly subject to their will? Do you not know, that, as to many of them, their judgement stands directly opposed to yours? Can even the preachers be your representatives, so as to decide absolutely for you in things not enjoined of God? They are your servants for Christ's sake, and I trust a very great majority are willing to comply with your wishes, and to serve you in every thing which tends to the glory of God, and your soul's salvation. But others of them differ in judgement from you; therefore you must maintain your freedom, and assert your right to every ordinance of God.

“At any rate, Brethren, keep your liberty. If you think it not safe to trust the Conference with your spiritual privileges, then, in the name of the Lord, I intreat you to keep them in your own power, and insist upon it, whenever it shall so happen that any considerable number of your society shall wish either to have preaching in Church hours, or the sacrament in your own chapels, that your assistant shall call the trustees, leaders, stewards, and local preachers in that circuit together, and these shall take the matter into serious consideration. And if it shall appear to a majority of them, that it would be most for the glory of God, either to have the one or the other, or both, then in God's name let it be so. Or if this method do not meet with your approbation, then let your whole society assemble together, and consider the matter as in the presence of God; and if it shall be found agreeable to the majority that you shall have the above privileges, let it be done accordingly. And let this Christian and brotherly method be always taken, in order to make known your mind to the Conference. Remember, O ye Methodists! that the reign of Popery is past and gone; let it never be restored to you under any shape or name. In the name of him who bought you with his blood, maintain the rights and liberties of your own consciences.”

Dr. Coke, too, in a letter to Mr. Kilham, expressed his

sense of the absolute and despotic powers possessed by the Conference, and of the sheer justice of admitting the laity to a participation of power in the management of the body. He says :

“ Religious liberty requires that the people should have some negative in respect to their ministers. Hitherto, we have been, since the death of Mr. Wesley, the most perfect aristocracy, perhaps, existing on the face of the earth. The people have had no power: we the *whole*, in the fullest sense that can be conceived. If there be a change in favour of religious liberty, the people certainly should have some power. Less than what is offered them in this article, it appears to me they cannot have. And, indeed, what preacher would wish, or at least ought to wish, to labour in a circuit, where the majority of the trustees, leaders, and stewards disapproved of him? The little power given in this instance to the trustees, is, I think, no more than they have a claim to; as we cannot do without men who will be responsible for our debts, and we are very much obliged to them for becoming responsible: and their votes, when united to the stewards and leaders of the whole circuit, become (of consequence) of small weight in so numerous an assembly.”

In the month of November, Mr. Kilham wrote a small pamphlet, and signed it “Aquila and Priscilla,” in which he states the particulars of the dispute between the Bristol trustees and their opponents, exhibiting the principles involved in the controversy, and the course which reason and scripture required the parties to pursue. This pamphlet was considered the most lucid and faithful statement of the case that had been published.

Mr. Kilham had been applied to by Mr. Edmondson, and several of his brethren to write a piece against a scheme then being on the tapis to appoint several persons as general superintendents or Bishops over the Connexion, and early in 1795 he issued a pamphlet signed “Martin Luther.” In this publication Mr. Kilham gave a summary of Chancellor King’s treatise on the constitution of the Primitive

Church ; and, comparing the ancient presbyteries, synods, councils, &c., with the several institutions of Methodism, showed their substantial agreement and contended that the introduction of the laity to co-operate fully with ministers was the only thing required to make the Methodist community correspond with the ancient church in her best and brightest days, and therefore there was no need for bishops, nor any of the pomp of hierarchy to promote the interests of Christianity. This pamphlet was addressed as a circular to the preachers, and was variously received, according to the prevailing sentiments of its readers. Several of his brethren expressed their approval of his performance, and intimated their determination to stand by him in his struggles for the Christian liberties of themselves and the people. Shortly after Mr. Kilham had issued this circular he penned the following memorandum :

“ By several letters from different friends, I am informed Mr. Mather is expected to be very severe on me at the next Conference. If he and his co-adjutors resolve to bring me to an account, I trust I shall not be destitute of that help from God, that I have found on other occasions ; I hope God will open the eyes of all our societies to see and claim their privileges, and not suffer any attempts to deprive them of these to prosper. May he break in pieces all undue influence, and cause his spiritual blessings to rest upon us ; and may he baffle the schemes of those that would hinder the people from having liberty of conscience, that his work may prosper in all our societies, I had also a comfortable letter from Mr. Thomas Taylor, who approves of my circulars, and still seems determined to promote the glory of God, — he has been bold and courageous in defending the liberties of the people. The same day brought me an agreeable letter from Mr. Bradburn ; he too appears determined to stand by the truth. There are several remarks in his letter on civil and religious liberty, breathing a good and generous spirit, and shewing that he is still for promoting the interests of the people, who are struggling for liberty. I have, however received a letter from Mr.

Smith, of Newcastle, who informs me, that, notwithstanding Mr. Bradburn's pretences, he is turned to the other side. Should this be so, he will not draw his friends with him : most of whom will condemn his conduct, however they may be pleased with his abilities."

In this memorandum we find Mr. Kilham referring to an agreeable letter he had received from Mr. Bradburn as well as from others, encouraging him to proceed in the cause of religious freedom. In this letter Mr. Bradburn says, "Fear not my firmness to the side I have espoused, and endeavoured to help forward. I am at work, but my agents are at Manchester, &c. I find this the most likely method to gain my point. I will do all I can consistently with our keeping together, to have religious liberty ; but I will for the present, give up a good deal, rather than divide the body. We have really nothing to fear ; the people are the radix of all power in our Connexion, and they are not to be trifled with any longer."

This letter was dated April 11, 1795, and appears to be the last Mr. Kilham received from Mr. Bradburn on the subject. His final testimony was thus in favour of religious freedom, and an encouragement to Mr. Kilham to proceed. How this testimony accords with his subsequent conduct is a problem not easy to be resolved consistently with his integrity.

The Conference of 1795 was now approaching and all minds were anxiously turned towards it as a crisis in the Connexion, when either some further advances must be made in the privileges of the people and the cause of Christian freedom, or awful consequences ensue. Mr. Kilham attended this Conference which was held in Manchester, but prior to his setting out, he wrote a pamphlet, for distribution among the preachers only, with a view to induce them to come to such determinations as would accord with the word of God and sound views of church government. In this pamphlet he endeavoured to show, First, that the original plan of Mr. Wesley in the organization of Methodism was progressive ; and if properly considered, admitted

of all such modifications as were necessary for extending rational freedom to the people. Secondly, that though the Conference had professed to follow Mr. Wesley's example, it had in many instances departed from the spirit and tendency of his measures, and pursued such a course of proceeding as he would not have approved had he been living; and Thirdly, he maintained that as the scripture was the only infallible guide of the church, they ought to acknowledge no other authority, but frame their regulations solely by its unerring dictates and requirements.

This Conference was more numerous attended than any former one in the history of Methodism, and as every exertion had been previously made by the contending parties to secure influence in favour of their respective sentiments, so when the time of this important assembly had arrived, numerous deputations from trustees, representing the several prevailing parties, were on the spot to confer among themselves as to the measures to be proposed and the means to be employed to secure their adoption. In the first instance all the trustees met together, and though unanimous as to the necessity of some additional powers being conceded to the laity, their views were much diversified on other questions. The Bristol trustees and those who adhered to them contended that the power they sought to abstract from the ministers should be transferred, not to the people as a body, but to the trustees. As to the sacraments, the trustees of the high-church party proposed that a law of uniformity should be enforced upon the whole body, compelling every society to be in bondage to the Established Church as before described; the other trustees proposed that the society should be at liberty, either to have the sacraments at the church or in their own chapels, and from the hands of their own ministers. The discussion of these matters induced so much warmth of temper and afforded so little prospect of an adjustment, that the friends of liberty withdrew, and then each party presented its petition to Conference, embodying opposite views, of course, on the sacramental question. The Conference, thus embarrassed, appointed a select

committee to devise a plan of accommodation, who after devoting several days to their arduous task, prepared a number of propositions, which with some modifications and alterations were ultimately adopted by Conference and designated "The plan of general Pacification."

It would occupy too much of our space to insert the Articles of Pacification at length; but it may be remarked that therein an important advantage was conceded respecting the sacrament, for it was now admitted that the ordinance might be administered where a majority of the trustees, and also a majority of the stewards and leaders, were in favour of its administration, still subject, however, to the consent of Conference. Baptism, burial of the dead, and preaching in Church hours were each made subject to the same regulations.

With regard to discipline there was much denied, and a little conceded. The admission of lay-representatives to district meetings and conference was still refused, and absolute power with respect to the appointment of church officers, and the calling out of preachers, was still left in the hands of the superintendent minister. The concessions made in reference to discipline had respect to the case of a preacher being immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in ability, or violating the rules of the body; by which concessions a meeting composed of the preachers of the district, the trustees, stewards, and leaders of the circuit, had power to cause the accused preacher to be removed from the circuit. This was certainly an advance in the right direction, but it was only a small portion of those important privileges and rights, which the voice of reason and scripture so imperatively demanded.

Although the Articles of Pacification passed the Conference there was a very respectable minority who were not satisfied with them, and strongly objected to the ambiguity of some expressions employed therein. Mr. Kilham drew up an address to the Conference, protesting against them. Fifty-eight of the preachers signed the document, and amongst them we recognize the names of some of the most

respectable ministers of the community. Supported by these signatures, the address was presented to the Conference, but it was not permitted to be read. Before the Conference closed Mr. Kilham had the satisfaction of finding that his labours in the cause of religious freedom were highly approved by a majority of the preachers, as well as by many respectable members of the Connexion, as appears from the following memorandum in Mr. Kilham's diary :

"I was very happy to find, that not only trustees, leaders, and many respectable members of the societies, were on my side, but a majority of the preachers expressed their satisfaction, and seemed thankful for what I had done; and some of them contributed towards the expenses I had been at in publishing the pamphlets,—declaring I deserved the thanks of every friend to liberty, and of the Methodists in general."

Shortly after Conference, Mr. Kilham, impressed with the conviction that permanent peace would never be established in the body until such a constitution was adopted as secured to the people New Testament rights and privileges, felt it a duty to make another effort for the attainment of this important object. Under this impression he wrote a pamphlet entitled "The Progress of Liberty." In this work he adverted to the course of Mr. Wesley in the progress of Methodism, showing that he had acted from time to time as altered circumstances required; he glanced at the alterations which had been effected since Mr. Wesley's death, and analyzed "the Articles of Pacification," pointing out their defects, &c.

In the second part of this work he lays down the "Outlines of a Constitution." which he humbly proposes to the consideration of "The People called Methodists." This outline embraces the following particulars :

First, That instead of the preachers having the sole power to admit and expel members, these acts should be done with consent of the people.

Second, That the members should have a voice in choosing their own leaders.

Third, That local preachers instead of being appointed

by the circuit preacher should be examined and approved by the leaders' and quarterly meetings: with which meetings also should rest the power of receiving and dismissing them.

Fourth, That as it was impossible to allow the people to choose their own ministers on account of the itinerant plan, yet the quarterly meetings should have a voice in recommending preachers to travel.

Fifth, That lay-delegates, appointed by the quarterly meetings, should attend the district meetings.

And, Lastly, he proposes, "with submission to the preachers and the connexion at large, to appoint one or two lay-delegates from every district meeting, to attend the Conference."

Such were the propositions of Mr. Kilham; and it may here be observed, such were the principles adopted as elements of the constitution of the New Connexion at its origin, and such remain its essential and distinguishing features at the present day.

For publishing the pamphlet, advocating these essential principles of freedom, Mr. Kilham was tried and expelled from the ministry at the ensuing Conference, 1796. It is true the pamphlet contained some free animadversions on existing abuses of power, but when it is remembered that it was written not for the eye of the public, but for the preachers only, those animadversions formed but a venial fault, if indeed they were a fault at all. The sin lay in the system which admitted such abuses without providing an effectual remedy. Nor should it be forgotten, that however severe Mr. Kilham's animadversions upon abuses in Methodism, his production breathes an ardent attachment to the community, and clearly shows that his only desire was to see the cause purged from every blemish, made as scriptural in government as in doctrine, and firmly settled upon a basis as likely to secure peace and harmony among its members, as to make aggressions upon the world of ignorance and sin.

While some in high authority soon gave intimations of

displeasure at the issuing of this pamphlet, others expressed their satisfaction and their hope that the principles advocated would be carried into effect. One very respectable preacher wrote him as follows: "I entirely approve of your outlines. The plan is most certainly comprehensive, simple, and all its parts properly adapted to the purposes of our good government. In case such a constitution should take place, I cannot forbear an anticipation of the pleasing consequences. And I am confident that herein I am expressing the sentiments of the greatest part of the preachers into whose hands your 'Progress' will come."

In another letter, a senior brother thus expresses himself to Mr. Kilham:

"I write partly to encourage you, because I foresee you will have some powerful opposers among your brethren; and partly to advise you to be cautious in your proposals for a new constitution, lest your opponents should accuse you of self-sufficiency. A great part of your plan I approve of; especially respecting finances—the preacher's fund—admitting the people to assist us in these things—and consulting them about local preachers, and even admitting some of those to travel. For I have long been persuaded, if we take the people with us in all our affairs more than we have done, it will be better for us. I have heard many complaints from some of the most sensible of them; and I am sorry to say there is too much truth in their assertions. They say there is an appearance of duplicity in many of us, and therefore they cannot put confidence in us. There is nothing in the Christian religion that need to be concealed. Let us do every thing in our power to convince both the world and our people that real Methodism is nothing else but real Christianity."

Such encouraging declarations of approval were, however, expressive of the feelings of only a small minority. The disapprobation was strong and general, and soon began to be manifested. The pamphlet was issued late in the year 1795, and in the month of December, a letter signed by ten ministers was sent to Mr. W. Hunter, the chairman of the

Newcastle district, requiring him to summon a district meeting for the trial of Mr. Kilham. The meeting was held at Newcastle on the 18th of February, when Mr. Kilham's conduct was investigated; but strange to say, no decisive measure was adopted respecting him. Meanwhile the friends of truth and freedom were not inactive. On the day before Mr. Kilham's trial, a public meeting was held in Newcastle to promote the cause which he had so laboriously advocated, when, Mr. William Smith being in the chair,

“ It was unanimously resolved,

“ 1st. That the present is a suitable opportunity for stating the sentiments of the fore-mentioned societies upon the following subjects, to the Connexion at large.

“ 2nd. That the prosperity of religion amongst the Methodists is in danger from the want of a fuller communication between the circuits and Conference, and from assistants having a power to act independently of their people, in the government of the societies.

“ 3rd. That the following address fully expresses the sentiments of the meeting.

“ 4th. That it be printed, and sent to the principal societies and preachers throughout the kingdom.

“ And 5th. That the following brethren be appointed a committee, for carrying the above resolution into effect.

“ William Smith, George Jefferson, Robert Frost, *Newcastle*. John Grundell, *Byker*. Ralph Annett, Luke Mattison, *Alnwick*. Robert Cairns, *Monkwearmouth*. Robert Hutton, Michael Longridge, *Sunderland*. Robert Whitfield, *Hexham*.

The address appended to these resolutions asserts,—

“ 1st. That according to the present existing rules of Conference (as far as we understand them) the Methodist preachers rule their people without consulting them.

“ 2nd. That this is contrary to reason, revelation, and the natural order of society.

“ 3rd. That this is one of the principal causes of the evils which prevail among us.

“ 4th. That it has already shaken the confidence which ought to subsist between preachers and people.

“ 5th. That the Conference only can open such an intercourse with the societies as will reconcile all parties, and remove every existing grievance.”

This circular which occupied about five quarto pages, was very extensively circulated in the Connexion, and produced a powerful impression on the minds of the people.

As the special district meeting had referred the decision of Mr. Kilham's case to the regular district meeting to be held at Sunderland in the month of May following, so this second district meeting, passed a resolution to refer the whole case to the ensuing Conference. As the Conference approached a strange alteration took place in the tone of many of Mr. Kilham's former supporters and abettors among the preachers. While Mr. Bradburn had given up his correspondence, Mr. Crowther, another ardent defender of christian freedom, began to relax in his zeal, professed himself embarrassed what course to take, and expressed his fears that if the people had liberty they would not make a proper use of it. Many others, on whose professions Mr. Kilham had relied as the friends of scriptural liberty, fell away in like manner, as the day of trial approached. But amid these desertions he received many encouraging communications from the laity. From Leeds, Manchester, Lancaster, Newark, Nottingham, Plymouth, Aberdeen, and many other places, he received cordial thanks for his services, with assurances of fidelity; and some communications were accompanied with pecuniary assistance towards the expenses he had incurred by publishing his works. In fact it was evident that the cause of truth and freedom, amid all the rebukes of foes, and the desertions of false friends, was progressing, and the opinion was gaining ground among preachers as well as laymen that delegates ought to be admitted to Conference. As a proof of this fact it may be stated that when a meeting of delegates from societies in the Nottingham district, held in that town, sent a letter on this subject to the district meeting of the preachers held the same week in the same place, they received an answer from the preachers expressing the willingness of all (except one who had his doubts on the subject,) that

delegates should be admitted both into district meetings and Conference. On this occasion the delegates issued a circular embodying the facts just stated. This important document should have a place in a volume which memorializes those events which originated the Connexion, and therefore we insert it :

“ At a meeting of delegates from societies in this district, to consult on the grievances under which we labour, in consequence of the unequal distribution of power in our church government, a letter was written to the meeting of preachers held this week at Nottingham, complaining of and stating these grievances. The assembly of preachers having taken our letter into consideration, they have favoured us with the following reply. Which letter, as we think it reflects honour on the preachers that composed that meeting, we rejoice in communicating to our brethren in general. We think it a very extraordinary and singular instance of their liberality and candour, and are happy in having the opportunity of showing to our friends their impartial attachment to the cause of religion, and their willingness to establish it in its pristine and genuine simplicity. We do most heartily and sincerely rejoice in the prospect of that peace and universal love that we think we see approaching, and hope that mutual confidence and general liberality of conduct and sentiment, will entirely supplant those jealousies and discords that have unhappily so long distracted our religious community. We hope that both preachers and people will shortly make it manifest to all men, that they have but one cause at heart, one interest to defend ; and that their joint prayers, their wishes, and their actions, all converge towards that desirable point, the glory of God and the salvation of mankind.

“ Samuel Barlow, Thomas Tatham, Joseph Woodhouse, Charles Sutton, Nottingham ; Robert Hall, Basford ; Joseph Finch, Mansfield ; William Huddleston, Arnold ; William Joyce, William Burton, Ashby ; John Welch, Derby ; John Bradley, Coventry. — Nottingham, May 26th, 1796.”

The following is the reply of the preachers : —

“ Dear Brethren, — We feel it our desire to promote, as

much as possible, the credit and prosperity of that cause in which we (as ministers of the Gospel) are engaged. With this view, we honestly declare our wish that the grievances of which our people complain may meet with the redress of Conference. We only speak the sentiments of our hearts, when we say, that we sincerely love the brethren, and feel it the greatest pleasure of our lives to spend, and be spent, for their present and future advantage; and we are fully persuaded, that while we act disinterestedly, we have nothing to fear, but every thing to hope. We are happy to find, that Mr. Benson has no objection that all preachers should come into Connexion with the voice of the people; this (to say nothing of prudence) we consider to be no more than equity and justice will claim. Agreeable to such principles, (principles we wish ever to abide by) we further observe; that members of society should be admitted or excluded by a majority of the leaders: — that the circuit and society stewards should be the voluntary choice of a majority of our people, together with the preachers: — and that all other regulations which concern us, (as a religious body,) should be grounded on a foundation as lasting, as it is just; and as prosperous, as it is prudent. We see no reason to object to the admission of delegates from our societies, into our district meetings; nor of delegates from our circuits into the Conference; to assist and advise with us, in all matters which properly concern them, as representatives of the people. As the friends of our common cause — as children of one heavenly father — as fellow-brethren in Christ Jesus, we entreat you, ‘Pray for us,’ that He who governs in Zion, may ever preside over us, and determine in all our councils. — We are, dear Brethren, your servants for Christ’s sake,

“ Thomas Hanby, Simon Day, John Beaumont, Thomas Dunn, George Sargeant, Thomas Greaves, J. Penman, Thomas Longley, Jonathan Parkin, John Atkins, John Nelson, George Dermott, George Morley.

“ I have my doubts that the alterations proposed will not be for the furtherance of the Gospel. — Samuel Bardsley.

“ Nottingham, May the 27th, 1796.

“ Sent by order of the meeting, T. Greaves, Secretary.”

This year (1796) the Conference was held in London. As in several preceding years, deputations from trustees were convened on the spot to deliberate as to the course to be adopted, and to memorialize the Conference. Resolutions were passed, and an address presented to the Conference, alleging that the work of God was injured by the dissatisfactions naturally arising from the exclusive power of the preachers and the want of a fuller communication between the circuits and the Conference. The address was accompanied by the following propositions.

“ 1. That an intercourse by delegates, or a public letter, subsist between the circuits, districts and conference.

“ 2. That all our rules of discipline be so expressed, that no individual, or small number of individuals, may be the sole judges of the meaning of rules which affect the whole body — or be entrusted with a power to act in opposition to whole societies and circuits without control.

“ 3. That all our public accounts be kept in such a manner that individual characters may not easily be rendered suspicious.

“ 4. That the admission of local and travelling preachers among us may be manifestly attended with the sanction of numbers instead of individuals.

“ We are decidedly of opinion that our rules, on these subjects, as they now stand, are not sufficiently explicit, and that the want of something more explicit has occasioned so much contention.

“ We entreat the Conference, as they regard the peace of the societies, to form some additional rules that will render the executive power more effectual.

“ Willing to contribute our mite to terminate the discords around us — we wait the reply of Conference, to suggest any further particulars on these points.

“ Signed, by order of the meeting,

“ RICHARD SAUSE, Chairman,

“ THOMAS DAY, Secretary.”

Afterwards, the deputation of trustees sent to Conference a memorial containing the following propositions.

“ 1. That no person be recommended to travel without the sanction of the leaders of the society where he has lived, and the quarterly meetings.

“ 2. That no preachers admit or exclude members, stewards, leaders, or local preachers, in opposition to the judgement of a leaders' and quarterly meeting.

“ 3. That no person be admitted into full connexion to travel, till he has the approbation of the two last quarterly meetings in the circuit where he labours, before the Conference.

“ 4. That all business, except stationing preachers, necessary to be transacted between the circuits, districts, and Conference, be done in a public general letter, the outlines of which to be drawn up by a committee of Conference.

“ 5. That this be transmitted to the districts and Conference, either by the preacher or a delegate, whichever is determined by a quarterly meeting.

“ 6. That delegates meet with the preachers in the district meetings and Conference.

“ 7. That all collections and public monies be entered into the society books where they are made, and when they become circuit collections, be transferred to the circuit books; and that minute details of all public monies be communicated to the societies.”

We have been thus special and minute in noting these public transactions in order that the reader may have a correct view of the state of public sentiment on the subjects advocated by Mr. Kilham, and that it may be seen the call for reform was not the clamour of a few, but the sober demand of the intelligent and respectable portion of the community.

The response which the Conference gave to these re-iterated memorials and appeals may be seen in the most striking and impressive form, in the expulsion of Mr. Kilham. We pen this remark not in anger, but in sorrow: we speak the language not of feeling but of sober conviction, from a careful review of the whole case. It is true Mr. Kilham, in his description of abuses, had employed terms which cannot be

justified; but those terms, especially when publicly regretted by himself in the presence of the Conference, were by no means sufficient to warrant a sentence of expulsion; and it is a remarkable fact that during the whole trial neither Mr. Kilham's moral character nor the principles he advocated were impeached. An impartial enquirer must admit that in the trial of a public character it was neither ingenuous, generous, nor consistent with a love of truth to overlook the great *principles* which he advocated. Supposing the spirit of his writings was reprehensible, yet it was due to him as a minister, and as a public character, and it was due to the community of which he was a member, and to the cause of truth in general, to investigate the *principles* he advocated, so that if deemed unscriptural they might be condemned as well as their author; and on the other hand if just and true, they might be approved and adopted. To pass over these in silence, and ground the sentence of condemnation on what was adventitious and apart from the great questions which were agitating every part of the connexion was not magnanimous, and reflected no honour on the wisdom and integrity of the leaders of a great community.

The proceedings too which characterized the trial, and the unusual form of expulsion adopted on this occasion, were characterized by circumstances which cannot be justified. The accused was denied a copy of the charges preferred against him, and when the sentence was pronounced, it was not only ratified by the preachers standing up, but subsequently by their signing a paper attesting the justice of the decision, &c. Mr. Kilham's own description of this matter is very affecting. He says:

“When I appeared at their bar and received the final sentence of expulsion, the preachers did it by their President, with all the gloom and silence of an Inquisition. To make my expulsion secure, it was not only confirmed by the preachers standing up and unanimously agreeing to it, but every person was required to sign a paper with his own hand, of the justness and uprightness of their proceedings in that matter. The paper was taken to the communion

table, and laid on the place where the memorials of the body and blood of Christ are presented every Sabbath-day; and Mr. Bradburn, (I cannot relate the tragical story without weeping,) who had formerly professed himself a friend to liberty and the rights of the people, — Mr. Bradburn, I say, stood by the rails of the Lord's table, like the governor of an Inquisition, to see that all his brethren signed. Here we find about one hundred and fifty preachers of the gospel of Christ, confirming the sentence of condemnation, in a way unheard of in the records of Methodism, if not in the records of ecclesiastical history. This is a sufficient proof, that the leading men in that process considered what I had written (to enlighten and save our people from many evils that they groan beneath) as worse than any crime that had ever been examined in any former Conference."

We have no desire to judge harshly, but when we have put upon this transaction the most favourable construction which charity itself can dictate, we are forced to the conclusion that the sentence passed upon Mr. Kilham was intended as much to counteract his *principles* as his personal influence, in fact to make him a public example for the admonition of all others who should feel inclined to advocate the same cause.

When Mr. Kilham was expelled from the ministry he wrote to the president the following letter, which evinces the Christian temper in which he had received the sentence, the pure motives by which he was actuated, and his intentions as to his future course.

"To Mr. Thomas Taylor, President of the Conference, London, 5th August, 1796.

"Dear Sir, — You will greatly oblige me, by reading the following lines to the preachers, and returning me their answer as soon as it is convenient.

"Ever since I came out to travel I never had the least desire to leave the Connexion, but wished to spend and be spent in the work of the ministry. The circuits where I have travelled, can bear witness that I have not only endeavoured to preach according to the regular plan, but to

publish the good tidings of salvation in many new places. When I heard that my pamphlets had given great offence to many of the preachers, and that my expulsion was deemed necessary on that account, many can testify, that I always declared, should that be the case, I had no intention of attempting to head a party, or joining immediately any community of dissenters. It has been my fixed opinion for several months, and continues the same at this moment, that the preachers will in due time be convinced I am neither a secret nor an open enemy to the cause of Methodism. If I have acted contrary to the views of many, It has been from conviction of the importance of the steps which I have taken. And if I have erred, it has been with a design to serve the Connexion at large. I have weighed all the charges brought against me with the greatest attention; and lest my own heart should deceive me, I have asked counsel of several very respectable friends: but after all, I cannot, without sacrificing my own principles, make any other acknowledgments than I have already made to you in the Conference, and in writing. If I had different views, you may depend on it, I would cheerfully submit to their influence. It is probable, before another Conference return, our views on these subjects may be the same. We may then unite with thankfulness, to build the temple of the Lord together. You allege nothing against my moral character; yet you have cast me off, after allowing me one day to consider upon the subject.

* * * * *

“ But what I principally desire you to consider is this. If it were possible, I could wish to preach as much this year, as I have done in any former. But it is probable this cannot be allowed. I should, however, wish to spend every Sabbath, in publishing the gospel of the grace of God. I am determined still to consider myself a Methodist preacher, and am resolved, by the grace of God, for this year, to show to the Connexion at large, that I have still the interests of Methodism at heart. In consequence of this, (unless something very particular happen to alter my purpose) I shall

join no sect or party of dissenters, but consider myself the friend of all. Do you, my dear brethren, by expelling me from among yourselves, exclude me also from having a place among the local preachers? If this be the case, do you also expel me from the society? Or do you admit me to be a member of your community, and a local preacher? I shall wait your answer to this letter with a degree of anxiety, as a great deal depends on it to me and my family.

“Praying that God may direct you in all things, I am your affectionate servant, A. KILHAM.”

This letter was considered by the Conference as a step towards a recantation, and a negotiation was opened with him in the hope of realizing that object; but he had too much integrity for such a proceeding. The letter breathed the honest and generous sentiments of his heart, but involved no compromise of principle, nor was intended as a bait for any sinister overtures. While Mr. Kilham adhered to the great principles he had advocated, he was equally faithful in his determination to make no rent in the community; and to unite with no other body of Christians, so long as there was any hope that time, reflection, and prayer would soften down asperities, and induce that sober and calm reflection which would yet result in the removal of abuses, and the enactment of liberal measures. The delegates assembled at Conference concurred in his view and like him waited in hope of a better day.

Shortly after Conference Mr. Kilham published an account of his trial, and subsequently was employed in preaching in various places, and in conducting the “Methodist Monitor” — a periodical devoted chiefly to the cause of religious liberty. The design and character of this publication is thus expressed in the introductory address or advertisement contained in the first number:

“There are several things that encourage me to undertake this work. 1. I believe it will be for the glory of God, and the furtherance of the gospel. 2. It will give our people and others, suitable views of religious liberty in general, and what ought to be established among us in particular.

3. It will, in some measure, state the subjects that now agitate our Connexion in a proper light ; and may awaken our friends in the largest circuits to a proper sense of our danger, and lead them to make use of such efforts as will save our Connexion from ruin. 4. I hope the Lord will make it instrumental in his hand, to destroy the influence of any that oppress the people, under a pretence that the glory of God, and the cause of Christ, require the measures which they pursue. If their undue power could be broken, Methodism would lift up its head, supported by equitable laws. 5. This work will contain many things that are not immediately connected with our disputes, and which may, under the blessing of God, be of infinite service to thousands yet unborn. 6. I have a prospect of help from many pious, sensible preachers and friends, belonging to our connexion, and from respectable persons of other religious communities. 7. It will give me another opportunity of showing my love to the preachers in general, to the Connexion at large, and to persons of every denomination. This alone outweighs every consideration of the reproach and contempt I may meet with from any quarter."

During the year there was much excitement prevailing in different parts of the Connexion. In Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Stockport, Sheffield, and other places, meetings were held, and central committees formed, for correspondence, and co-operation with the advocates and friends of christian freedom, with a view to effect that which was so generally desired — the adoption of a liberal constitution, in the Methodist body. But as time advanced the prospect of effecting this became fainter, and some friends in Leeds suggested to Mr. Kilham the propriety of a fund being raised by subscription to meet expenses in the event of a separation, and also as a source of encouragement to such preachers as might be disposed to ally themselves with a reformed section of Methodists. Mr. Kilham's reply to this proposition manifests both his invincible integrity, and his singleness of purpose, as well as his extreme reluctance to abandon the hope of a division being even yet prevented. He said, " I disapprove

of it altogether—I yet hope that a division will be prevented; but whatever be the issue, if the preachers will not act from the conviction of their own minds, the Lord will provide. I am determined never to countenance the holding out a golden bait to allure them. Shall we make the love of filthy lucre our condemnation? Let us put our confidence in Jehovah, and pursue the paths of uprightness, and all shall be well.”

Towards the close of the conferential year, some friends in Leeds purchased Ebenezer chapel which had formerly been occupied by the Baptists. Mr. Kilham preached the opening sermon, May 7, 1797. Here numbers crowded to hear the gospel and enjoyed the ordinances of the gospel without any human restrictions, and here the Methodist New Connexion was subsequently formed.

Although Mr. Kilham (it grieves us to state) was opposed and often maligned and misrepresented by the preachers, there were several who maintained a friendly intercourse with him, and while encouraging him to proceed, professed an intention, if matters were brought to a crisis, to identify themselves with the cause of the people's liberty. Messrs. W. Bramwell, and H. Taylor, then labouring in Sheffield, were of that number, and in reference to their sentiments and intentions Mr. Kilham received the following letters,—

“ Sheffield, May 5, 1797.

“ My dear Brother, — You will wonder at my silence in not answering your kind letter sooner, but the wonder will cease when I tell you that I have been near three weeks from home, and only returned last night. I have been visiting my friends in Liverpool, Warrington, Preston, Bolton, Blackburn, &c. I most certainly would have complied with your request, had it been in my power, but, strange as it may seem, I never saw the printed paper you mention. Secret publications are as carefully kept from us, as from you. Will you consider me as writing to you in the confidence of friendship, and at the present keep it to yourself? I believe you will, and therefore write freely. By this time, I think you must have lost all expectation of a reform taking place

in our Connexion. If you have not, I must own I have. Depend upon it, a large majority of the Conference are determined to risk every thing, rather than make the alterations so much wished for by the people. Methodism can only be preserved, by reducing it to scriptural simplicity, and by uniting preachers and people together by those ties which bound them in the first ages of the gospel. In Methodism there is an excellent outline for this purpose, if it were well filled up; and I think the time is not far distant, when all preachers who are friends to such a plan, should meet together, and perfectly understand each other on these subjects, and with firmness join together in forming circuits accordingly. This will be lifting up a proper standard for the people, who would flock to it from all parts of the kingdom. A Conference might soon be formed of travelling and worthy local preachers, agreeable to the views of the people. Those who choose might stay with the Old Connexion quietly, and the friends of genuine Christian liberty, might walk in love, and go on their way rejoicing, and increase daily. A division may take place without those dreadful effects which we sometimes fear. These things have lately been much on my mind. I have committed my thoughts to paper, and if I could see you alone, I would let you see them. Write soon, and tell me all you think of this strange letter, but be sure you keep it to yourself, as I do not yet see the time when we ought to act publicly. It will appear, I think, before long.—Wishing you every blessing, I am, yours affectionately, HENRY TAYLOR.

“Sheffield, 11th May, 1797.

“Mr. Bramwell is now in the room with me, and what I now write you must consider as coming from both of us. We want to see you, and indeed we must see you here as soon as possible, and we intreat you, let every other plan give place to this. Your visit to us must be without any person, directly or indirectly, knowing any thing about it: the nature of the business requires this secrecy, and when you know the particulars, you will be of the same opinion. *It may be as well for you to send your friends at Sheffield*

information of the night you intend to be here, and that you will preach in one of the dissenting chapels ; this will be a proper cover for an interview with us ; but you must keep the matter from all your friends here, and from every one : you can easily apologize to them for coming sooner than you expected. We advise you to stay one night only, and for that to be Tuesday or Wednesday. When you have fixed on the night, send me a private letter, and meet us the next morning by four o'clock. Our business we think of such importance, that we wish to see you before our district meeting at Leeds, the 24th instant.—Yours, &c.. H. TAYLOR.

Mr. Kilham states “ After making a few necessary preparations for the journey, I set off for Sheffield ; the next day I met Mr. Taylor, and early the morning after, I had a secret interview with him and Mr. Bramwell. They both spoke freely on the necessity of a reform, and seemed determined to have this effected or leave the Connexion. I saw the paper they had written on church government, and dictated some alterations, which had their approbation. They both appeared timorous, but if their professions are deserving of credit, they are determined to have a reform at all events, or to risk the consequences. I preached several times to large congregations, with much satisfaction ; many persons seem resolved to have a redress of grievances, and appear confident that their preachers at Sheffield would either see this effected or separate from the Conference. Nevertheless, I found much reasoning in my own mind on the conduct of Messrs. Bramwell, Taylor, and Emmet, — they appeared so exceedingly afraid of the higher powers. I expressed my fears to one or two particular friends, but they had the fullest reliance on their firmness and integrity.”

Mr. Bramwell is well known as a minister of sound understanding, eminent piety, extraordinary usefulness, and ardent attachment to Methodism. The fact therefore of his friendly intercourse with Mr. Kilham under his peculiar circumstances, speaks plainly as to his conviction of Mr. Kilham's integrity and piety, as well as of the soundness of

his principles, and the views entertained of the proceedings of the late Conference.

We are now brought to the period of the Conference in 1797, which was held at Leeds, when the final and decisive struggle was made in behalf of religious freedom, resistance to which was the immediate occasion of originating our own religious denomination. As in former years, deputations from trustees and societies were again convened to exercise their influence upon Conference. Indeed, since the death of Mr. Wesley, the Conference of lay-deputations had been as regular as the Conference of the preachers. On this occasion there were about seventy present, influenced by several objects. Some were still aiming to effect Church adherence, others were in favour of entire liberty of conscience in this respect; but all, it would seem, were desirous of reducing the enormous power of the preachers, and establishing a correspondent increase of power in favour of the laity. At several previous meetings held at different places for the purpose of appointing delegates, it had been proposed that one essential condition required from the Conference, should be the restoration of Mr. Kilham to his place in the ministry; but Mr. Kilham, with his characteristic disinterestedness and singleness of heart, declared that no treaty in relation to his restoration should embarrass their negotiations with the Conference. He was influenced only by public spirit. He had suffered for the cause of liberty, and was willing still to suffer to any extent, and therefore insisted upon his case, as that of an individual, being totally disregarded and lost sight of in their arrangements with the Conference.

On the first of August the delegates or deputations met, and three different propositions 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 abridgement 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. On reviewing the determination of the Conference in their resisting the reasonable and scriptural requests thus presented by respectable and pious men assembled from different parts of the kingdom with an honest intention to promote the welfare of the Connexion, we would exercise all the charity which the gospel requires, and judge as impartially as we hope to be judged at the last day; but after all, we are forced to the conclusion that the Conference was chargeable with a great degree of injustice, not to say tyranny, and incurred a fearful amount of responsibility. We are prepared to make every allowance for their circumstances, in reference to their decisions respecting the Church and sacramental questions. In fact they demand our sympathy in some respects rather

than our censure. They were beset with difficulties, which were for the time insurmountable, and the probability is that a decision to administer the sacraments and hold service in church hours in *all* the chapels, though accompanied with a declaration of liberty of conscience to all who dissented from such a regulation, would at that time have caused a fearful schism — a schism of perhaps more than one half the community. This is evident from a fact in the history of the Connexion in Ireland; for when the Irish Conference about twenty-five years afterwards passed a resolution to have preaching in Church hours and administer the Lord's supper in their own chapels to such only as desired it, leaving all who dissented from this regulation at perfect liberty to go to Church as usual, there was a schism of about one half, or somewhere about sixteen thousand persons, who formed a distinct and rival community, under the denomination of "Primitive Wesleyans," or Church Methodists. This body still exists and professes to conform to Methodism as Mr. Wesley left it, and yet, somewhat inconsistently with this profession, has adopted lay-delegation on the same principle as our own denomination. These facts clearly show that in declining to legislate for the introduction of the ordinances, the Conference was controlled by the force of circumstances, rather than by its own wishes and desires. Some few, no doubt, among the preachers as well as amongst the laity were influenced by a political leaning towards the Establishment, and the hope of a legal incorporation within its pale; but the great body of the preachers were desirous that Methodism should exist as a distinct community, enjoying within itself all scriptural ordinances, and no doubt deeply regretted that the prejudices of the laity prevented this from being sooner accomplished.

But for the refusal of lay-delegation no such apology can be pleaded. While truth, reason, scripture, and justice required this concession to the people, there was no difficulty in the way of its being accomplished. The prejudices and wishes of the laity were in favour of it. They desired it, *they presented* again and again their petitions to obtain it.

Even those who clung to the Church, united with those of opposite sentiments to secure the boon of lay-representation. Thus the way was perfectly clear for granting this privilege and its bestowment would have been hailed with delight by a grateful and loyal people. This privilege indeed must yet be granted.

We are aware it may be pleaded that the Deed of Settlement presented a legal barrier to the introduction of laymen into Conference. But this is more specious than true. The Deed of Settlement did require the *hundred* to consist of preachers only, and thus excluded the laity from forming a part of what is technically called the "The Legal Conference," though even this difficulty could have been removed by an act of parliament. But apart from this procedure, the laity could have been admitted to Conference on the same principle as those preachers not of the Hundred are admitted. Hundreds of preachers annually attend Conference, and take part in its deliberations and determinations, whose names are not legally enrolled; and by what law or logic can it be shown that a suitable proportion of lay-representatives could not be admitted on the same footing? The plain truth is, *they could now and always could have been thus admitted*; and the refusal of the privilege solicited can only be resolved into a determination on the part of the preachers to retain the power of legislation to themselves. Should it be further pleaded that the admission into Conference of the preachers not enrolled in the Deed of Settlement is in conformity with the *spirit* of the letter which Mr. Wesley left for the guidance of the Conference; it may be replied, on the other hand, in favour of the admission of lay-representatives, that Mr. Wesley did on some occasions invite laymen to deliberate and co-operate with him in his early conferences, and thus Mr. Wesley's example affords a precedent in favour of laymen, quite as good as the plea grounded on his letter in behalf of preachers. But, in fact, neither his letter nor his example constitute the rights of either preachers or laymen, but eternal justice and the unchanging word of God.

When the Conference had cut off the hopes of the friends of scriptural liberty, their way was plain for seceding from the parent body, and organizing themselves into a distinct denomination, under a constitution which secured to them the enjoyment of those rights and privileges which they had so long sought in vain. But this decision required more firmness of principle than many were found to possess. Many of both preachers and laity yielded to considerations of convenience and expediency in the trying hour. Even Bramwell, who had clung to Kilham in his adversity and encouraged him to persevere in defence of the people's rights, did not venture to cast in his lot with the few who stood out for principle; and though Taylor resigned when first the Conference refused the reasonable concessions of the delegates, he was afterwards induced to withdraw his resignation. The gifted Robert Hall has somewhere said, that "To arbitrate between the interfering claims of inclination and of duty; and to forego a present, in order to realize a greater but future good, is the moral arithmetic of man." But this arithmetic, alas, is never sufficiently practised, and in the crisis we are now contemplating it was either not understood, or not duly appreciated by many in the Conference. Three of the preachers there were who adopted this maxim, Messrs. W. Thom, S. Eversfield, and A. Cummins. These men voluntarily left the advantages of an established and somewhat opulent community, and united with the devoted Kilham in the organization of the New Itinerancy, with the prospect of reproach, hardships, and toils of no ordinary kind.

These brethren with a number of delegates from the people met together in Ebenezer Chapel, Leeds, on the 9th of August, 1797, when Mr. Thom was elected President, and the basis of a constitution was adopted in conformity with the principles which had so long been publicly set forth and advocated. The full development and formal statement of these principles were reserved until the ensuing Conference.

The most important places in which friends declared for

the New Itinerancy, were Alnwick, Ashton, Bolton, Chester, Hanley, Leeds, Liverpool, Macclesfield, Manchester, Nottingham, Newcastle and Stockport, which became the nuclei of distinct circuits, and consisting altogether of about five thousand members.

The denomination being formed it was desirable that controversy as far as possible should cease between the friends of freedom and the parent community, and that each should steadily pursue the great work of promoting the salvation of souls. This was the mode of action inculcated upon the members of the New Connexion, as appears from a paper published in the "Monitor," shortly after the division. The author was Mr. Kilham, and the pacific and noble sentiments which it contains are worthy of being constantly remembered :

"As a division has actually taken place, there are several things which ought to be considered for the general good. If they are candidly examined, they may, under the blessing of God, be attended with advantage to the reader.

"The first thing we should carefully attend to, is, that our motives be pure. Jesus Christ informs us, if our eye be single, our whole body shall be full of light. If we have nothing in view but to check the influence of the preachers — to set up an independent church against them — to be at the head of a party — to obtain temporal advantage, or be avenged of any that have opposed us, our eye is not single — our motives are not pure. On the other hand, if the glory of God — the peace of our own souls — the welfare of our Christian brethren — spreading the gospel, and bringing sinners to the Lord Jesus, are the objects which influence our conduct, then our eye is single, and he that searches the heart, reads our intentions, and is privy to all our desires.

"2. We should secondly examine our cause, to know whether it be according to God or not. A man may have pure motives, and yet have a bad cause. If we have pure motives and a good cause, we have nothing to fear. What we have long pleaded for, appears so reasonable, that we

are astonished how any men should attempt to withhold from us our just rights, as the followers of the Son of God.

“3. Support your cause by argument, and not by calumny. It is easy to call names, and to load those who differ from us with reproach; but when nothing is advanced in support of a cause, but mere declamation, and bitterness and wrath supply the want of meekness and patience, we are moved to pity the declaimer, and to beseech God to be gracious to his soul. Show your opponents that both reason and scripture require, that preachers and people ought to act in unison together. Both ought to unite, and walk together in love. Be kind and affectionate; exercise all the graces belonging to your profession one towards another, that God may be glorified. If others are determined to use bitter language, and suffer themselves to be led aside by tempers which reproach their profession, let us be careful that we do not fall into the same snare.

“4. Let us not be earnest in seeking to proselytize our brethren. If they examine for themselves the subjects which have agitated us, and plead with God for direction, he will show them what is his good, and acceptable and perfect will. If our brethren, with whom we have formerly walked, can give us the right hand of fellowship, we ought to rejoice. But if they are not convinced that ours is the most excellent way, it would be wrong to attempt to force them into our measures.

“5. Avoid anxiety about a great increase of numbers. If we are but few in number, we should all be of one heart and soul; and we shall find that God will dwell in the midst of us. When any sect or party are more anxious to increase their numbers, than they are to have suitable members for christian society, we cannot suppose they are walking in the most excellent way. But if we seek an increase of numbers from pure motives, the Lord will cause his goodness to pass before us, and grant us the desire of our hearts.

“We shall have several difficulties to encounter. But nothing can harm us while we disinterestedly follow that

which is good. Perhaps our greatest difficulties may arise from the following considerations :

“ 1. Very few, if any popular preachers, are come out to our help.

“ 2. The rich and great, in many of the societies, are opposed to you.

“ 3. The prejudices of many run high. They talk of the good old way — the old tried ground — the old ship — and positively declare none ever prospered that left the Connexion.

“ 4. Reproach and persecution are manifest from quarters we did not expect.

“ 5. But these things ought not to move us. If God be for us, who can be against us? If the Lord stand by and help, we have nothing to fear. Let us cast our care upon Him, knowing that he careth for us.

“ If we attend to the following particulars, we shall never be moved : — 1. Let us live near to God. Let us seek to glorify God in our body and spirit, which are his, and determine to know nothing among men, but Jesus Christ and him crucified.

“ 2. Let us be careful whom we admit into society. Persons may embrace our liberal sentiments, and wish to give us the right-hand of fellowship, whose lives are immoral. We should guard against sin. If we are but few in number, and sincere in our profession, the Lord will bless us. But if we are many, and have persons united with us whose lives will disgrace their principles, the spirit of God will be grieved, and his influence withheld from our worship. The preachers have been too anxious for numbers. This has greatly injured the work. Let us learn wisdom by what they have suffered. If all who join us are sincere, God, even our own God, will dwell with, and in us for ever.

“ 3. Let us be careful whom we admit to exercise in public. Let us not push forward those who may have zeal without knowledge.

“ 4. Follow truth and peace with all men. Let the truth as it is in Jesus be your first object, and peace the second.

Determine to place these before you in all your engagements. Sacrifice every thing that stands in their way. Resolve to suffer the loss of all things, rather than renounce them.

“5. Never make the pulpit a vehicle of abuse. A good cause needs not bad tempers to support it. Abusive language may irritate, but it wounds and distresses those who are sincere. Bless those that curse you. Do good to those who hate you; and unless in cases of absolute necessity, let neither the pulpit nor the press be employed in mentioning these subjects. When necessity requires this service at your hands, let it be done in such terms as cannot justly offend any candid follower of the Son of God.

“6. Follow the openings of Divine Providence. If your work and counsel be of God, he will open the way before you.

“7. Lastly, let prayer ascend to God continually, for his blessing to attend you in all your undertakings.”

In the next chapter the distinctive principles of the Methodist New Connexion will be set forth, and their harmony with the dictates of reason and scripture will be demonstrated.

CHAPTER III.

THE DESIGN AND GENERAL CONSTITUTION OF THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH — CHURCH-FELLOWSHIP A DUTY — GOVERNMENT NECESSARY — OUTLINE AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES SUPPLIED IN THE NEW TESTAMENT, BUT MINOR ARRANGEMENTS UNDETERMINED — CONSCIENTIOUSNESS NECESSARY IN THE LEARNING AND OBSERVANCE OF WHAT IS TAUGHT — MUTUAL CHARITY BETWEEN CHRISTIAN CHURCHES OBLIGATORY — THE DISTINCTIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION — THE APPLICATION OF THEM IN THE COMPOSITION OF MEETINGS, THE ENACTMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS OF LAW, ETC.

ON reading the New Testament, however cursorily, no one can fail to perceive that in the establishment of every institution, and in the employment of every agent, the end there proposed is the deliverance of the whole family of man from sin and guilt, by the establishment of a community, distinct in the character of its objects and means from all merely political or secular associations; and a community which should furnish the brightest displays of the power of divine truth and grace, and of the holiness, as well as the benevolence of the divine character. By the exhibition of evangelical truth, and the accompanying influences of grace, men are brought to seek the noblest benefits the human mind can conceive or the heart desire; — the forgiving love of God, the sanctification of the entire moral nature, and the glories of an everlasting life: and these benefits they find, in obedience to a law which requires repentance on account of past sin, a cordial believing acceptance of Christ as the great propitiation, and that supreme love to him which forms at once the root and chief element of personal holiness. Baptized

in his name, as it is associated with the names of the Father and the Holy Spirit, they acknowledge his absolute authority and their entire subjection. Partaking of the emblems of his broken body and shed blood, they publicly express their faith in his propitiatory sacrifice, and their grateful remembrance both of the love in which it originated and the blessings procured by it: they meet to celebrate his praises, to call upon his name, to be made more perfectly acquainted with his will, and to edify one another: and they engage in individual and combined exertions to make him known to the world around, and to induce all, of whatever nation or class, to acknowledge his sovereignty and secure his salvation. Such was the first gospel church: and thus was at once made known the ultimate object proposed and the adaptation of the means to its accomplishment. "The spectacle presented by the followers of the Lamb in the primitive age, was a counterpart, in some respects, though in others a contrast, to the standing miracle so long exhibited by God's ancient people. Diffused among all the nations of the earth, they were yet distinct from all; but they were distinguished not by an earthly and sordid, but by a character altogether unearthly; by intense brotherly kindness, by ardent philanthropy, by purity and righteousness, by their contempt for sublunary, and their attachment to celestial things. The society which they composed, formed thus a sort of *imperium in imperio* — a kingdom *in* the world but not *of* it — a spiritual edifice, constructed from materials originally unfit and discordant; destitute of all the elements of political and secular cohesion, yet firmly erected by the principles of faith and love; an edifice embellished by the beauties of holiness, and the extacies of heaven; and every accession to which, instead of destroying its uniformity, or impairing its comely proportions, served to augment its strength and its grandeur."* "For some ages," the eloquent Robert Hall has observed, "the object of that prayer (John xvii, 20, 21,) was realized, in the harmony which prevailed

* Candlish.

among Christians, whose religion was a bond of unity more strict and tender than the ties of consanguinity; and with the appellation of brethren, they associated all the sentiments of endearment that relation implied. To see men of the most contrary character and habits, the learned and the rude, the most polished and the most uncultivated, the inhabitants of countries alienated from one another by institutions the most repugnant, and by contests the most violent, forgetting their ancient animosity, blending into one mass, at the command of a person whom they had never seen, and who had ceased to be an inhabitant of this world, was an astonishing spectacle. Such an assimilation of the most discordant materials, such love issuing from hearts naturally selfish, and giving birth to a new race and progeny, could be ascribed to nothing but a divine interposition. It was an experimental proof of that kingdom of God, that celestial economy, by which the powers of the future world are imparted to the present."

The Christian church thus becomes "the most interesting association in the universe of God. In originating it, divine goodness has its richest display; in planning it, divine wisdom has bestowed its grandest conceptions; in founding it, divine love has imparted its richest gift; and in its erection, divine power has displayed its most exquisite workmanship: in watching over its concerns, divine providence exercises its most select care; and in its entire interests God manifests an especial complacency."†

It is impossible that an institution like this — planned by infinite wisdom, established by divine authority, and pregnant with such results, should be left without any obligation binding on the consciences of the accepted servants of Christ to attach themselves to it, and to labour both to secure its advantages for themselves, and to render it effective in the accomplishment of his beneficent designs with respect to others. The multitudes, therefore, in the present day, who, while they deem themselves Christians, yet neglect or refuse

† Symington.

to identify themselves with the church, in its fellowship, its objects, and its interests, are either destitute of the love of Christ, and are therefore the objects of his displeasure; or, widely mistaking his will, they greatly lessen, if not endanger their future reward. The commands not to forsake the assembling of themselves together—to love each other with pure hearts fervently—to exhort, and teach, and admonish, and edify one another—to be baptized in the name of Christ, commemorate his dying love, and zealously co-operate in the promotion of his glory,—are universal and imperative. They are founded on reasons and enjoined in terms which admit not of exceptions; and he who either carelessly disregards or unwittingly misapplies them, does it at his peril.

That in such a community, government under some form is necessary, will be questioned by none except those whose minds are hopelessly bewildered in the labyrinth of their own dreamings, or whose violent passions can brook no control. The Christian church being established for the announcement and preservation of Christian *truth*, the observance of Christian ordinances and *laws*, and the universal extension of Christ's kingdom, its members, "by the act of uniting themselves with it, profess to believe certain doctrines, to be under obligation to perform certain duties, and to be bound to possess a certain character. Of course, the very purpose for which, and the very terms on which the Master has formed this body, and bound its members together, necessarily imply, not only the right, but the duty, of refusing to admit those who are manifestly hostile to the essential principles of its institution, and of casting out those, who, after their admission, as manifestly depart from those principles." The union which Christ intended to establish in his church, was a union of *spiritual* men. "Any other union is of little worth. A union of professors with professors—of one dead church with another dead church—is but the filling up of the charnel house or heaping of the compost pile: a union of dead professors with living saints. This union of life and death, is but to pour the green and *putrid water* of the stagnant pool into the living spring. It

is not to engraft new branches into the goodly vine, but to bandage on dead boughs that will but deform it. It is not to gather new wheat into the garner, but to blend the wheat and chaff together. It is not to gather new sheep into the fold, but it is to borrow the shepherd's brand and imprint it on the dogs and wolves, and call them sheep. The identifying of christened pagans with the peculiar people, has done much dishonour to the Redeemer, has deluded many souls, and made it much more difficult for the church to convince the world."*

To ascertain the qualifications of candidates for such a fellowship — to watch over the conduct of those admitted to it — and faithfully to administer discipline according to the law of Christ, become, therefore, important and indispensable duties, which suppose the existence, somewhere, of official power, and require its exercise by some class of duly appointed persons. There must also be some orderly recognition of those by whom the worship of the community is to be conducted and its ordinances administered; and their modes of celebration, together with the most suitable times and places, must be determined and observed. All these, with other arrangements that will be found necessary for the conservation of the community and the regeneration of the world, and many of which must be adapted to the ever-changing combinations of external circumstances, render imperative the establishment and practical recognition of a directing and controlling power. Were the existence of government left by the Divine founder of the Christian church to be determined by its own will, the first lessons of experience would evince its necessity and compel its establishment. But it is not left thus. He to whom the church is indebted for its existence, gave governors together with that existence, and ordained that governments should be perpetual therein. Not only did he require his apostles to teach and enforce his laws, but in every city in which a church was formed, they, with his authority, ordained elders,

as overseers, to teach, to watch over, and to rule. They affirmed that "governments" were set by God in the church; they directed that elders, duly qualified to govern, should be appointed; and they enjoined on the churches obedience to legitimate pastoral authority, as a duty of universal and permanent obligation.

Looking only at the importance of the objects to which government is directed, it might be expected that every thing necessary to their attainment would be clearly prescribed; but on extending the view to the innumerable diversified circumstances under which that government must be exercised, and the ever-changing incidents which must come under its cognizance and require correspondent arrangements, it appears to be equally plain that a precise formula, obligatory at all times and applicable to all circumstances, would not be given; but rather that a considerable limit would be left within which offices and governmental functions might be adapted to changing circumstances and wants, though only in accordance with general principles and laws. And such is the course apparently adopted. The great truths required to be believed, — the general nature of the worship to be rendered — the conditions of fellowship — the qualifications for office — together with the only modes of discipline to be employed, are presented with a clearness which only negligence or perversity can mistake, and with a fulness which impiety alone will attempt to improve. In every thing *essential* to the holiness, and order, and efficiency of the Christian church, its Divine founder has made perfect provision; leaving human agency no other work than to learn what he has so plainly taught, and to do what he has so wisely and authoritatively commanded. The teachers of the commandments of men, and the observers of will-worship, together with such as would be "lords over God's heritage," stand condemned by him; whilst his accepted people are taught neither to imitate their example nor to submit to their authority. But on passing from essentials to circumstantialities, a different state of things is presented; and which *is thus accurately* described by Archbishop Whateley. "No

such thing is to be found in our Scriptures as a catechism, or regular elementary introduction to the Christian religion; nor do they furnish us with any thing of the nature of a systematic creed, set of articles, confession of faith, or by whatever name we may designate a regular, complete compendium of Christian doctrines. Nor again do they supply us with a liturgy for ordinary public worship, or with forms for administering the sacraments, or for conferring holy orders; nor do they ever give any precise *directions* as to these and other ecclesiastical matters." "Among the important facts which we can collect and ascertain, from the sacred historians, scanty and irregular, and imperfect as are their records of particulars, one of the most important is *that very scantiness* and incompleteness in the detail; that absence of any full and systematic description of the formation and regulation of Christian communities, that has been just noticed. For we may plainly infer, from this very circumstance, the design of the Holy Spirit, that those details, concerning which no precise directions, accompanied with strict injunctions, are to be found in Scripture, were meant to be left to the regulation of each church, in each age and country. On any point in which it was designed that all Christians should be, every where and at all times bound as strictly as Jews were to the Levitical law, we may fairly conclude they would have received directions no less precise, and descriptions no less minute, than had been afforded to the Jews.

"It has often occurred to my mind, that the generality of even studious readers are apt, from want of sufficient reflection, to fail of drawing such important inferences as they often might, from the *omissions* occurring in any work they are perusing; — from it *not* containing such and such things relative to the subject treated of. There are many cases in which the non-insertion of some particulars which, under other circumstances, we might have calculated on meeting with, in a certain book, will be hardly less instructive than the things we do meet with.

"And this is much more especially the case when we are

studying works which we believe to have been composed under Divine guidance. For in the case of mere human compositions, one may conceive an author to have left out some important circumstances, either through error of judgement, or inadvertency, or from having written merely for a particular class of readers in his own time and country, without any thought of what might be necessary information for persons at a distance and in after ages: but we cannot of course, attribute to any such cause, omissions in the *inspired* writers. On no supposition whatever can we account for the omission by all of them of many points which they do omit, and of their scanty and slight mention of others, except by considering them as withheld by the express design and will (whether communicated to each of them or not) of their Heavenly Master, restraining them from committing to writing many things, which naturally, some one or other of them at least, would not have failed to record."

The general view embodied in these passages, though opposed by individuals to whom great respect is due, are abundantly supported by some of the ablest minds connected with the great branches of the Protestant family; as the following specimens may show.

"It is of the utmost importance to keep ever in view the difference between the economy of the Old Testament and that of the New. The neglect of this has given rise to the grossest errors, and to divisions, by which those who ought to be united together in the bands of Christian love, have been sundered from each other. In the Old Testament, every thing relating to the kingdom of God was estimated by *outward forms*, and prevailed by specific external rites. In the New, every thing is made to depend on what is *internal and spiritual*."

"The apostle Paul says, indeed, Eph. iv. 11, that Christ gave to the church certain offices, through which he operated with his Spirit, and its attendant gifts. But assuredly Paul did not mean to say that Christ, during his abode on earth, appointed those offices in the church, or authorized the form *of government that was necessarily connected with them*. All

the offices here mentioned, with the single exception of that of the apostles, were instituted by the apostles themselves, after our Lord's ascension. In making these appointments they acted, as they did in every thing else, only as the organs of Christ. Paul, therefore, very justly ascribes to Christ himself, what was done by the apostles in this instance as his agents. But the apostles themselves have given no law, requiring that any such form of government as is indicated in this passage should be perpetual. Under the guidance of the Spirit of God, they gave the church this particular organization, which, while it was best adapted to the circumstances and relations of the church at that time, was also best suited to the extension of the churches in their peculiar condition, and for the development of the inward principles of their communion. But forms may change with every change of circumstances. Many of the officers mentioned in that passage, either were entirely unknown at a later period, or existed in relations one to another, entirely new.

“Whenever at a later period, also, any form of church-government has arisen out of a series of events according to the direction of divine providence, and is organized with a regard to the Lord's will, he may be said, himself, to have established it, and to operate through it by his Spirit; without which nothing pertaining to the church can prosper. The great principles which are given by the apostle in the passage before us, for the guidance of the church; — these and these only, remain unchangeably the same; because they are immediately connected with the nature of the Christian church, as a spiritual community. All else is mutable. The form of the church remained not the same, even through the whole course of the apostolic age, from the first descent of the Spirit, on the day of Pentecost, to the death of John the apostle. Particular forms of church-government may be more or less suited to the nature of the Christian church; and we may add, no one is absolutely perfect, neither are all alike good under all circumstances.

“It must indeed, be of great importance to examine in-

partially the relations of the apostolic church; for at this time the Spirit of Christ, through the apostles, wrought in his purest influence, by which means the mingling of foreign elements was prevented in the development of this system of ecclesiastical polity. In this respect we must all admit that the apostolic church commends itself as a model of church-government. But, in the first place, let us remember, agreeably to what has already been said, that not all the forms of church-government which were adapted to the exigencies of the church at this early period, can be received as patterns for the church at other times; neither can the imitation be pressed too far. And secondly, let us remember that after true and faithful inquiry on these subjects, men may honestly differ on these minor points without interrupting the higher communion of faith and love."*

"If the gospel dispensation be the most advanced form in which religion will be known in our imperfect world, it must follow that its ritual will be very limited and simple in its character. If it be *the ministration of the Spirit*, that is, the ministration of a more abundant light and sanctity, it must be one in which bodily exercise will be accounted as profiting little. We search in vain for its book of leviticus. But we need not search long to discover the essentials of Christian truth, or of Christian character and duty. It says very little about forms, but much about unseen realities which forms should resemble; — little as to the *mode* in which men should worship the Almighty, but much as to the *spirit* in which it should be done. The fact that the Israelites were furnished with instructions so ample and minute relative to forms of worship, when the servants of God were required to approach him through the medium of a various and extended ritual, was in itself enough to have warranted the persuasion that the dispensation to follow that of Moses would be followed by a similar course of instruction on such topics, if a similar order of services was

* Neander.

meant to be continued. The absence, accordingly, of such instructions in the New Testament, is conclusive that such services are no longer to hold the place which was once assigned to them ; but that they are left to be originated by the spirituality and wisdom which the gospel will never fail to confer on its sincere disciples, and by those brief injunctions and intimations which it contains in relation to such matters. The language of Paul is strictly to this effect : when checking some unscriptural indulgences among the Corinthians, he says, *That which I received of the Lord, I delivered unto you.* The brevity, the indirectness, the very looseness observable in the notices which occur on such points in the New Testament, furnish evidence, not, as some will contend, that a new power was to be created for the purpose of supplying the imagined deficiency of the scriptures in this respect, but rather that the age for elaborate effort and scrupulous attention to them had passed.* —“As it has not pleased our Almighty Father to prescribe any particular form of civil government for the security of temporal comforts to his rational creatures, so neither has he prescribed any particular form of ecclesiastical polity as absolutely necessary to the attainment of eternal happiness. The gospel only lays down general principles, and leaves the application of them to men as free agents.”† —“The principles of church-government contained in or suggested by the New Testament, still leave much liberty to Christians to adapt them in detail to the circumstances in which they are placed. But whatever be the form (of government) they take, they are bound to respect, and to model themselves by, the *principles* of church communion and of church discipline which are contained in the New Testament ; and they will be fruitful in holiness and usefulness, so long as they conform to them. . . . That discipline is defective and bad in itself, or is ill administered, which does not accomplish these ends ; and that is best which best promotes them.”‡

* Vaughan.

† Tomline.

‡ R. Watson.

“It cannot be expected that all churches and all persons in them should agree in all principles and practices belonging unto church-order; nor was it so in the days of the apostles, nor ever since, among any true churches of Christ.

“For they allowed distinct communion upon distinct apprehensions of things belonging unto church-order and worship, all keeping ‘the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.’”*

“The *general principles* of church organization were laid down as binding; the *details* were not prescribed. They were left, like the subject of civil government, to be modified by circumstances, from age to age. The gospel was to be preached in all lands, and in all times; the church was to be located under different forms of civil government, and among people of far different habits and customs; the organization of the Christian community was to be such as would be consistent and proper under a civil government of the monarchical, the aristocratic, or the republican form. Those regulations in detail which would be fitted to the customs of the oriental world, might be little adapted to habits which might exist towards the setting sun; and rites, and customs, and modes of worship and of discipline which would have been appropriate to the times when the apostles lived, might be ill-adapted to some future age of the world. The same great principles of truth and worship might receive new influence and power under some modified form in a future age; and the external arrangements of the church might be left, as the subject of human government is, somewhat to the developments of time and experience. Truth is always the same. The *doctrines* of religion are not susceptible of being modified. Nor was it necessary or desirable. But the details of worship, and order, and discipline in the church did not require or admit of the same explicitness which was requisite in regard to the doctrines of the trinity and the atonement.”†

The whole of this part of the case may be thus stated.

* Dr. John Owen.

† Barnes.

As in matters pertaining to personal salvation, *essentials* are presented with a distinctness which renders error inexcusable, and unanimity imperative, while in some non-essentials, no oracular decision is given, but individual members of the same churches are left to form their own judgements from general principles or laws, and to act agreeably to them; yet in connection with that mutual charity which “ keeps the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace;” — so, also, in matters of government, while in every thing essential to the regular organization and prosperity of the churches, the will of their Divine Lawgiver is sufficiently plain, yet room is designedly left for such an exercise of liberty in adapting minor arrangements to varying circumstances, as may issue in the establishment of diversity both in names, and in modes of administration; and that, not only in different ages and nations, but in co-existent churches in the same countries and towns; yet all of which hold, at the same time, *the Head*, and, in the catholic spirit of their common Christianity, recognize their joint relationship to the Head and to each other.

But this state of things, wisely adapted to man's intellectual and moral constitution, and in harmony with the uniformity which characterizes the species, and the endless diversity that distinguishes the individuals, through the entire system of nature, has given birth to two important practical errors: — while some have treated governmental forms, and institutions, and functions, as utterly unworthy of serious consideration, and as not being within the sphere of conscientious conviction and observance, others have given them a prominence which is due only to the *vitals* of religion, and have made the slightest differences the subjects of bitter and ceaseless contention. On the former of these subjects, the following remarks by Dr. Wardlaw deserve special attention. — “ Although the distinction between *moral* and *ceremonial* is a quite intelligible, and far from unimportant distinction, — the former involving the principles of immutable rectitude, the other resting on considerations of special and temporary utility, — yet it would be

a very false conclusion, that to the observance of what is ceremonial we are under no properly moral obligation. We are *morally* bound to *do the will of God*. That will is our rule;—and whether his injunction be a personal commission, with which no one has to do but ourselves,—or a ceremonial institute, prescribed to any limited number of men for a special purpose and limited time,—or an ethical precept addressed alike to all mankind,—a moral obligation is violated, if obedience is not rendered. The will of the supreme legislator is disregarded:—there is a moral offence,—a sin of omission. I am afraid that not a few of my fellow Christians are far from being sufficiently impressed with this. It is not sufficiently a matter of *conscience* with them. I will not even affirm at present (whatever may be my private opinion) that there is any form of church-government laid down in the New Testament. But what I affirm is,—that it becomes every professed subject of Jesus, if he would maintain the *conscientiousness* for which I plead, to make himself sure either that there is, or that there is not,—so that he may conscientiously conform to it, if there is, and conscientiously conform to whatever, in changing circumstances, he deems expedient, if there is not. Those of whom there is reason to complain, are those who proceed upon the assumption that there is none, without any very anxious inquiry about the matter,—who do not, in truth, think inquiry on such subjects worth their while. These may be designated the *indifferentists*. And this spirit of indifference is not unfrequently, both by themselves and others, mistaken for a *catholic* spirit. But between the two there is a wide and essential difference. . . . I have no idea of allowing any state of mind to assume the high designation of a catholic spirit, which is founded in indifference to any part of the Lord's will."

But whatever evils may have arisen from the want of a conscientious regard to the mind of Christ with respect to the circumstantials of ecclesiastical polity, those created by their *undue elevation*, and by the jealousies and envyings, *alienations* and strifes to which that undue elevation has

given rise, immeasurably transcend them. That from these evils the Methodist New Connexion has suffered much, is sufficiently evinced in the former parts of this volume; and equally true is it that too often have its adherents and defenders reciprocated the wrong. But a brighter day has dawned; and upon the warring hosts the Spirit of peace has descended. Instructed to blend catholicity with conscientiousness, alienation and jealousy are giving place to holy and ardent love, and the reciprocations of kind offices are substituted for animosity and strife. — An alliance meriting the appellation, “Evangelical,” has arisen as an additional bond of union between those sections of the Christian church which hold the truth in love, and as an additional channel through which their hallowed purposes and feelings may more freely flow. The conviction that *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*, is more deeply and generally felt: — the desire for a nearer approximation, is more emphatically expressed: — and in the not very distant future, the eye of faith discerns the period when *Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim*; and when charity, — that softest yet most powerful bond — *the bond of perfectness*, — shall, by annihilating the prejudices and uniting the *hearts* of all who love the Lord Jesus in sincerity, bring them nearer in mind and judgement, and leave not a wish to provoke each other, except to love and good works.

To aid, however feebly, in bringing about such a consummation, must surely be the desire of all in whom the spirit of sectarianism does not predominate over zeal for the glory of Christ and love to those who are his. In a volume, therefore, intended to be commemorative of the *Jubilee* of the Methodist New Connexion, — and as preliminary to the exposition and defence of its distinctive ecclesiastical polity, a place is perhaps due to the following passages, as embodying and enforcing those principles of Christian catholicity, in their associations with a *good conscience*, and with *holding fast the form of sound words*, on which both the loveliness of the Christian church in the eyes of a degenerate world, and its influence thereon, must greatly depend.

“The more truly catholic the communion of Christians is, it is the more truly Christian. — Nor is it mere peace that is to be aimed at, but free, mutual Christian communion with such as do hold the Head, Christ. As peace among nations infers commerce, so among Christian churches, it ought to infer a fellowship in acts of worship. I wish there were no cause to say this is declined when no pretence is left against it but false accusation; none but what must be supported by lying and calumny. Too many are busy at inventing of that which is no where to be found, that exists not in the nature of things, that they may have a colour for continued distance. And is not this to fly in the face of the authority under which we live, *i.e.* the ruling power of the kingdom of Christ, the Prince of Peace? 'Tis strange they are not ashamed to be called Christians: that they do not discard and abandon the name, that can allow themselves in such things! And 'tis here to be noted, that 'tis quite another thing, what is in itself true or false, right or wrong, and what is to be a measure or boundary of Christian communion. Are we yet to learn that Christian communion is not amongst men that are perfect; but that are labouring under manifold imperfections, both in knowledge and holiness! And whatsoever mistake in judgement or obliquity in practice can consist with holding the Head, ought to consist also with being of the same Christian communion; not the same locally, which is impossible; but the same occasionally, as any providence invites at this or that time; and mentally, in heart and spirit at all times. And to such peace (and consequently communion) we are all called, in one body, Col. iii. 15. We are expressly required to receive one another (which cannot but mean into each others communion,) and not to doubtful disputations, Rom. xiv. 1. If any be thought to be weak, and thereupon to differ from us in some or other sentiments, if the difference consists with holding the Head, they are not, because they are weak, to be refused communion, but received; and received, because the Lord has received them: ver. 3. All that we should think Christ has received into his communion, we ought to

receive into ours, Rom. xv. 7. Scriptures are so express to this purpose, that nothing can be more."*

"I do not lay so great a stress upon the external modes and forms of worship as many young professors do. I have suspected myself, as perhaps the reader may do, that this is from a cooling and declining from my former zeal, (though the truth is, I never much complied with men of that mind.) But I find that judgement and charity are the causes of it, as far as I am able to discover. I cannot be so narrow in my principles of church communion as many are; that are so much for a liturgy, or so much against it, so much for ceremonies, or so much against them, that they can hold communion with no church that is not of their mind and way. If I were among the Greeks, the Lutherans, the Independents, yea, the Anabaptists, I would hold sometimes occasional communion with them as Christians, (if they will give me leave, without forcing me to any sinful subscription or action :) though my most usual communion should be with that society which I thought most agreeable to the word of God, if I were free to choose. I cannot be of their opinion that think God will not accept him that prayeth by the Common Prayer Book, and that such forms are a self-invented worship which God rejecteth. Nor yet can I be of their mind that say the like of extemporary prayers." †

"The unity of the church is a unity in Christ. All believers in Christ are one. It is a spiritual unity, — a unity of principle and affection. There may be much unity, where there is not uniformity; and there may be much uniformity where there is little unity. Diversity of sentiment respecting some parts of the will of their common Master, has necessarily separated Christians into various denominations. But still, they are all one. It is impossible for any man on earth to become one with Christ without becoming, in virtue of his union with him, one with all that are his; and there is no way in which he can dissolve the bond that unites him to them, but by severing, through apostacy, that

* Howe.

† Baxter.

which unites him to Christ. Let Christians, then, even while they conscientiously separate, still feel themselves one. One in principle and one in affection, let them be one to the utmost extent that conscience will admit, in co-operation. Let every thing be removed out of the way, for which the word of God is not pleaded, that tends to mar this unity, to impede this harmonious co-operation.

“ In speaking of a catholic spirit, it must not be forgotten that it has its limits ; that the charity and forbearance which it involves have their extremes. I speak of it as exercised amongst those who acknowledge one another as fellow-christians, — as embracing the circumference of Christianity, but not extending beyond it. The designation of *evangelical* is now tolerably well understood, as comprehending all who hold and advocate the doctrines of salvation by grace through faith in the merits of the righteousness and blood of a Divine Saviour, — a faith which worketh by love, under the renewing influence of the Holy Spirit.

“ It is evident that the gospel must be something determinate. Doctrines that are at perfect antipodes, on the most essential points, cannot *both* be the gospel. If the principles which have just been mentioned be the gospel — that cannot be the gospel too, which denies them all, and affirms their opposites ; which robs the blessed Redeemer of his Divinity and divests his death of its expiatory character ; which makes heaven the reward of human virtue, instead of the gift of God to believers through the mediatorial merits of Christ ; which denies the opposition of man's nature to God, and the consequent necessity of a directly divine influence to his conversion. If the love which fellow-christians are enjoined to bear to one another be love ‘ for the truth's sake,’ it is utterly absurd to understand a catholic spirit as inclusive at once of the abettors of principles so opposite and contradictory. If any set of opinions merit the designation of anti-christian, they are such as these.*

“ The apostles left the Church of Christ one united body,

in the full possession of the truth. Those who had separated from it had separated from Christ the Head; and were, with propriety excluded from the communion of the saints. The genuine disciples of Christ were all visible members of the church universal, which was now spread over considerable portions of Asia, Africa, and Europe. The church was one, as the human race is one. There was unity, and yet considerable variety in the outward forms and observances connected with the institutions and worship of each congregation. This diversity, in lesser matters, arose from the different habits, manners, and ceremonies which characterised the different nations that embraced the doctrines of the cross. The gospel did not remodel society, but grafted itself upon the civil institutions which it found existing; and suffered men still to be citizens, like others, while yet they became Christians. This produced no discord, or alienation of feeling. A Christian of Asia, though Asiatic in his manners and observances, was at once received into communion with the churches in Europe, without being required to renounce his peculiarities. Irenæus says, that while each retained his own customs 'they held communion with each other.' The bishop of Cæsarea, in a letter to Cyprian in the year 256, says that the Church of Rome 'has many particulars of divine worship, which are not precisely the same observances as prevail in Jerusalem;' 'so likewise,' adds he, 'in a very great number of other provinces, many things vary according to the diversity of place and people; but nevertheless, these variations have at no time infringed the peace and unity of the catholic (or universal) church.'

"The reformers further held, that uniformity was not necessary to unity—that the church admitted a variety in lesser matters, and that all were to be received as brethren whom God vouchsafed to take for sons. Said the churches of France and Belgia, when addressing the other reformed churches on the subjects of union and harmony: 'There hath scarce been any age which hath, in such sort, seen all churches following together one thing in all points, so as there hath not always been some difference, either in

doctrine or in ceremonies, or in manners ; and yet christian churches through the world were not, therefore, cut asunder, unless peradventure then, when the bishop of Rome broke off all agreement, and tyrannically enjoined to other churches, not what ought to be done, but what himself would have observed. But the apostles did not so. Barnabas, indeed, departed from Paul, and Paul withstood Peter ; and surely for no trifle ; and yet the one became not thereby more enemy or stranger to the other ; but the self-same spirit which coupled them from the beginning never suffered them to be disjoined from themselves. It is the fashion of Romanists to command, to enforce, to press, to throw out cursings, and thunder excommunications upon the heads of those who whisper never so little against them ; but let us according to the doctrine of the Holy Ghost, suffer, and gently admonish each other ; that is, keeping the ground-work of faith, let us build love upon it ; and let us jointly repair the walls of Zion, lying in their very ruins." *

"From the epistle to the Romans, it appears that there prevailed in that church a diversity of opinion respecting meats and days : ' One believeth that he may eat all things ; another, who is weak, eateth herbs. One man esteemeth one day above another ; another esteemeth every day alike.' What, then, is the conduct prescribed by the apostle Paul, in reference to these differences ? Not that the majority should expel the minority — not that the minority should withdraw — not that either party should attempt to produce a compulsory uniformity — not even that the more enlightened should set themselves to reason their weak brethren out of their conscientious scruples. Widely different from all these is the expedient prescribed by the inspired apostles, for maintaining the peace and unity of the church amid these differences of opinion. That expedient is the mild and reasonable one of mutual forbearance : ' Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and

* Struthers.

let not him which eateth not, judge him that eateth : for God hath received him. We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.'

"In accordance with a practice not unfrequent with him, Paul takes occasion, from a specific occurrence, to prescribe a general rule, and to enforce it by a general reason. The general rule which he prescribes to christians, in the circumstances referred to, is, 'Receive ye one another.' This reception seems naturally to comprehend two things : that they should admit their brethren who differed from them, first to their affectionate intercourse in private ; and, next to communion with them in the Lord's supper, and in all the other privileges of the church.

"Thus comprehensive was the class of persons denoted by the expressions, 'weak in the faith,' and 'weak brethren.' But, with regard to all such weak believers, to all who really held the faith of the gospel, though adulterated in some degree by admixtures of Jewish prejudice or pagan superstition, the apostolical canon to their more enlightened brethren was, 'Receive them.' Such was the rule ; and what was the reason on which it was founded ? one most potent and satisfactory. 'God had received them,'—'Christ had received them.' They had obtained remission of sins, and reconciliation to God, through the death of his Son, and had been made partakers of his regenerating Spirit.

"Such is the rule prescribed for regulating the conduct of Christians, who, as such, must be united in the faith of all that is essential to salvation, but who disagree respecting things which are either indifferent or of inferior importance. And such is the reason adduced to enforce the rule. But if the reason be valid in one case, it will apply in all cases exactly similar. Wherever, then, the reason exists, the rule must be acted on ; in other words, wherever men have found acceptance with God, wherever Christ has received them, their fellow-christians are bound, by the example of their common Father and their common Saviour, to receive

them ; to love them as brethren, and to admit them to communion in the church.

“ Were such a state of things realized, the divisions of the church would be almost entirely healed, and her unity re-established. There would still exist distinct denominations ; but whatever is most malignant and hurtful in such divisions would be exterminated. There might still be the Episcopalian, the Presbyterian, the Congregationalist, and the Methodist ; the Baptist and the Pædobaptist ; the voluntary and the advocate of Establishments ; but they would be perceived to belong to one heavenly community, and would be separated by a distinct line of demarcation from the ‘ world of the ungodly.’ Amid complexional differences, which would impart to them variety and beauty rather than deformity, they would exhibit conspicuously a family-likeness ; and the influence of their common Christianity, though slightly modified by their individual peculiarities, would be unequivocally stamped on them all.

‘ Varied in all, and yet in all the same.’

‘ Non omnibus facies eadem, nec tamen diversa.’

What has been said in reference to the worshippers in the celestial sanctuary, and will be fully realized only in them, would thus be in no small degree exemplified also in the worshippers on earth :—

‘ Ten thousand thousand are their tongues,

But all their hearts are one.’

In the next place, the union now described, imperfect confessedly as it might be, would yet afford a glorious proof of the truth and divinity of the gospel of Christ—a proof far more satisfactory than would be afforded by that absolute uniformity or identity of sentiment among Christians, after which some good men have so fondly, but so preposterously sighed. Absolute uniformity, indeed, so far from affording a strong proof, or any proof at all, of the truth of Christianity, would afford strong ground for suspecting that it was ‘ a cunningly devised fable,’ or that, even if true, the Son of God had no longer any disciples on earth. It would prove that *Christianity*, instead of invigorating and expanding, paralyzed

completely the human faculties ; that it bereft men, and was intended to bereave them, of the powers of thought and reasoning ; since, if they think and reason at all, they cannot be expected in the present state to think exactly alike. But if, under the influence of the gospel, the followers of Christ were prevailed on to walk together so far as they were agreed, never extending their separation in practice beyond the limits of their differences in sentiment, they would afford a proof of the truth and efficacy of their religion, plain and palpable, and which even the irreligious would hardly fail to appreciate. It would be perceived that they loved each other with an unearthly affection — an affection ardent and disinterested, and which could surmount the most formidable obstacles ; not with that sectarian attachment which is limited to those who think and act in all things like the individual himself, and which is usually combined with no little enmity towards all who think and act differently. It would be perceived, that where they separated it was not from caprice or jealousy, but with reluctance and grief, and only in obedience to the high and peremptory requirements of principle and conscience. Their conduct would thus exhibit a most attractive combination of holiness and charity, of conscientiousness and forbearance ; a most instructive exemplification of that ‘ wisdom which is from above,’ the first attribute of which is purity, and the second peaceableness — an exemplification likely to produce the happiest results. While their separation, in certain things, evinced on the one hand a scrupulous regard for the divine authority ; their union, on the other, would be so conspicuous as in a great measure to absorb their differences, and to realize the object of their Saviour’s intercessory prayer, that ‘ his disciples might be all one in him and in the Father ; that the world might believe that the Father had sent him.’ ” *

The lovely scene portrayed in these extracts, stands out in bold relief from the conflicts narrated in other parts of this volume — conflicts which, seeming rather to present

* Balmer.

repelling contrasts, than the dark shades merely of a harmonious and beautiful whole, startle or confound many among the humble and devout followers of Christ, and force upon them the bewildering questions ; — “ What are the principles, out of which, even in the Christian church, such contests originate ? Are they in their own nature evil ? Can they exist in minds truly regenerate ? And if so, how do they comport with the holy character, and righteous government of God ? ” Partially to meet these difficulties, as well as more fully to prepare for — what some will already suppose has been too long delayed — the statement of the distinctive principles of the church-polity of the Methodist New Connexion, the following general remarks are submitted.

The *manifestation of his own glory*, more especially as connected with the communication of happiness to intelligent and moral agents, is the noblest end which an absolutely perfect being can possibly propose ; and the promotion of his glory, is the highest object to which the attention of created intelligencies can be directed. But among *secondary* objects, the enjoyment and communication of happiness hold the most prominent place ; and man is evidently formed not only that he may be holy and happy in himself, but that by the example he places before his fellows, and the diversified benefits he obtains power to confer, he may promote their welfare. A Creator who well knows how to adapt means to every important purpose, and how perfectly to harmonize what to finite minds would seem to be eternally discordant, has connected public usefulness with individual happiness, and has even rendered the former subservient to the latter, by implanting the desire of power as an instinctive principle in the heart of man, and by connecting with the exercise of that power a feeling of complacency or delight. These class among the emotions by which, from childhood to mature age, the torpor of the human creature is aroused, and his selfishness partially corrected : a higher direction given to his aims, and a wider sphere presented for his exertions ; — and he who would otherwise have been

satisfied with just seeing and hearing what was passing around him, or with labouring to extract the greatest possible quantum of pleasure from the most perfect state of passiveness and ease, is thus made willing to submit to the most fatiguing or painful bodily labours, or to the most perplexing intellectual investigations—to brave the dangers of the field or the ignominy of the scaffold ; — yet finds an ample recompense not only in the anticipated approval of his Judge, but also in the consciousness of the influence exerted and the benefits conferred by him, and the esteem he has thus secured and deserved.

Feelings thus virtuous and honourable in themselves, the religion of the gospel not only sanctions in social life, but presses into its own hallowed service. It requires its professors to attend to every thing lovely, praiseworthy, and of good report ; to provoke each other to love and good works ; to covet earnestly the best gifts ; to covet spiritual gifts, but especially that which is of the highest importance in the Christian church, the gift of prophecy or religious teaching : it affirms that whoso desireth the office of a bishop, desireth a good work ; and it enjoins on its teachers to study to show themselves workmen not needing to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. Thus, instead of quenching the noble aspirations of the regenerated spirit, ardent in its desires for pre-eminent usefulness, it kindles and directs them ; multiplies on earth the fruits of righteousness, and gives additional splendours to that heavenly crown which is incorruptible and that fadeth not away. But aspirations thus honourable in themselves, and adapted by the God of nature and grace, to purposes so holy and beneficent, yet partaking that common corruption which has tainted every principle of moral action in man, have been made to produce a mass of mischief, over which tears of blood might justly be shed, and from which every unsteeled heart recoils with horror. In the history of human ambition, therefore, is seen — not the outgoings of a pure and ardent spirit, lofty and benign in its purposes, untiring in its efforts, making the noblest sacrifices for the good of the

human family, and thus producing a scene of moral order and beauty ravishing to the eye and transporting to the heart — but rather a long black catalogue of artful schemes, and dark intrigues — or of unrighteous exactions and diabolical cruelties, invented and inflicted by selfishness, for the gratification of the lust of power. That while the irregularities of other passions were too frequently appearing in the church ; and were requiring at times the severest corrections of its discipline, *the love of dominion* should alone be in perfect order, was too much to expect. Rather, in the passive graces which give so much of beauty to the Christian character, and in the lessons of submission so wisely taught, it saw a ground on which it might securely lay the foundations of despotic power ; and, in the incomparably glorious and tremendous recompenses connected with obedience to the Christian law, and rebellion against it, an instrumentality was found by which it could raise the superstructure. The unhallowed fire was too soon kindled ; and the inglorious work too soon accomplished. The fact, therefore, stands too broadly out on the page of history to admit either of concealment or palliation, that by no class of persons has the love of power been more grossly abused, than by some of the professors of the religion of the Son of God—by some who have sustained the highest offices among his professing people. Under the sanction of the hallowed appellations of pastors and rulers, some truly regenerate minds have unwittingly pandered to a passion rendered unholy by excess ; while by others, with hearts unrenewed, though sustaining the highest offices in the church, pride, and covetousness, and revenge, have been concealed under the specious masks of zeal for the glory of Christ, and a desire to promote the purposes of his holiness and love. Hence arose, in all its vast and frightful magnitude, that masterpiece of satan's policy — “ that *mystery* of iniquity ” — the papal hierarchy ; claiming — as it still claims — dominion over the souls, the liberty, the property, and the lives of men : — imposing the heaviest exactions, — subjecting *them* to the most degrading or disgusting penances, — or

inflicting, whenever its crooked policy will allow, the most cruel tortures or ignominious deaths : — and all this under the pretence of extending that kingdom which is righteousness and peace, and that religion which is love. It is, therefore, no wonder that against a power thus cruelly abused, a feeling of stern hostility has been aroused : — that a watchful jealousy has been awakened, running out at times into morbid sensibility, — alarmed by spectres of its own creation, — imagining ambitious designs when they had no existence, — and refusing to submit to legitimate authority, lest it should in time grow up into enslaving despotism. A procedure this, hurtful, not only as it has resisted, insulted, and dispirited men of the most enlightened views and liberal feelings, — who were labouring to defend liberty against the inroads of licentiousness, and mildly to execute law, without the lust of power ; but also in preventing thousands from throwing off the yoke of abject servitude, under the belief that that yoke would have only to be exchanged for another more galling still, or for that anarchy which ultimately entails more disappointment and ruin than absolute tyranny itself.

In the church, therefore, as well as in relation to civil government, it becomes a subject of important enquiry, whether the order and prosperity of the community cannot be secured, without absolute power being placed in the hands of any one class ; or whether the exercise of authority cannot be so guarded, as to prevent it from degenerating into despotism. To this question the attention of the founders of the Methodist New Connexion was specially directed ; and their views on this question led to the establishment of the community, and formed, and still form, its distinguishing polity. These views, however, were professedly derived not merely from those general principles of government by which the civil liberties of Britons have been so long and so happily preserved, but also from the accounts given in the New Testament of the establishment and order of the first Christian churches. Disclaiming all authority merely human, in the gospel church, which they considered

as being pre-eminently *the kingdom of God*, yet believing that, not a finished system, but a general outline, of ecclesiastical polity was delineated in the New Testament, they sought to ascertain what the Head of the church had, either by himself, or by his teaching Spirit in the apostles, rendered absolute and permanent, and what he had left to be adapted to times, and places, and circumstances, under the guidance of a holy wisdom, and in harmony with general principles involved in the facts, and directions, and reasonings recorded in the gospel. In matters which seemed to them to be determined by Christ, they pleaded for no liberty; while on the other hand, they refused to bow to an authority which they believed he had not set up. For the infallibility of their judgements, or the absolute perfection of their institutions, no plea is needed. To that they made no claim — for this they ask no vindication. But they did profess to have elicited the great principles of Christian liberty, in contradistinction to what they deemed an unscriptural, a dangerous, and an often abused power, claimed and exercised by the stated ministry alone; and they professed to have so incorporated those principles with their religious institutions, as to have equally secured the due performance of ministerial functions and the rights of the other classes of the Christian commonwealth.

The venerable founder of Methodism, with his coadjutors and successors, holding the view to which repeated reference has been made, that *only general principles and rules* of church-polity are made obligatory in the New Testament, and, therefore, that ministerial and pastoral duties may be discharged by different classes of persons under varied official designations, divided those duties among three classes, — circuit or itinerant preachers, — local preachers, — and leaders; each having its sphere of labour distinctly marked out, yet all being engaged within a narrower or a wider sphere, — publicly or more privately — in the great works of spiritual instruction and edification. A system of government was formed, which, though at first paternal, and in that sense *despotic*, yet gradually, with one important exception, as-

sumed the general characters of the Presbyterian system ; so that while the latter had its courts of session, and presbytery, and synod, and general assembly, the former established its leaders' and quarterly meetings, — its district meetings and conference. — The founders of the Methodist New Connexion retaining the belief that Methodism was scriptural in its doctrines and religious worship, — its offices and discipline, adopted them without any change ; but renouncing all dependence on the Established Church, they, as avowed dissenters, added the administration of the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper to the regular duties of the ministry, and laid down, as fundamental, the principle, — “ *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.*” — That this principle is embodied in the entire system of government established by them, and that it is there allowed the utmost latitude consistent with the purposes for which government is instituted, will be seen from the following statement of the constitution and functions of the official meetings.

“ 1. Conference. This is a meeting held annually ; and is composed of an equal number of preachers and laymen, each circuit sending one of its preachers and one of its lay members ; or in case of necessity, a circuit sends one representative, providing there be alternately a preacher and layman, when single representatives are appointed. Should any circuit be unable to send a representative, a letter accompanied by the required documents, details, and collections, is sufficient. The treasurer of the Connexion, the corresponding member of the annual committee, the steward and treasurer of the book-room, the general secretary of our missions, the superintendent of the Irish mission, a deputed minister or layman, alternately, from the Irish Conference, and the guardians of the Connexion, under the deed lately executed, are, by virtue of office, members of Conference, without interfering in any way with the privilege of the circuits in which such individuals may reside. The business

of Conference is to make laws for the government of the Connexion, — to decide impartially on charges affecting the character of preachers or other officers, and on appeals referred to it by the quarterly meetings; — to disburse the various funds of the Connexion, — to station the preachers for the year ensuing, — to investigate the condition of each circuit, — to adjust differences, and to promote, by friendly co-operation and advice, harmony and love throughout the community.

“ In addition to the above, a committee of seven persons is chosen each Conference, by ballot, to transact the business of the Connexion betwixt one Conference and another; four of the members are preachers, and three are laymen, one year, and *vice versa* the following year. It is the duty of this committee to see that the resolutions of Conference are carried into effect, — to give advice in all matters of dispute and difficulty, — and to make provision for such circuits as may through death, new openings, or other causes, need supplies during the ecclesiastical year. A report of its proceedings is prepared by the corresponding member and annually presented to Conference.

“ 2. District meetings. These meetings are composed of all the circuit preachers in the district, with an equal number of laymen (including the representatives to last Conference) who are elected by the respective quarterly meetings. These meetings are designed to form and carry out plans for the revival of the work of God in the district, — to investigate the condition of the societies, chapels, and Sabbath schools, and to prepare correct returns of the number of members, probationers, Sabbath school teachers, and scholars, &c., for the use of Conference, — to ascertain the amount raised, in each circuit, for the different Connexional funds, — to investigate all claims on the yearly collection and chapel fund, — to receive applications for the division of circuits, — to examine candidates for the ministry, — to lay before the district any resolution of the Conference affecting the circuits, and to ascertain whether they have been carried into full effect. It will thus be seen that these meetings are designed and calcu-

lated to shorten the duration of Conference, — to strengthen the executive, — to secure more correct information on points of local interest than can be done at a greater distance, — and to afford a legitimate channel through which many evils may be either altogether prevented or speedily rectified.

“ 3. Quarterly meetings. These are held in each circuit, and are composed of the circuit preachers, the circuit stewards, the secretary of the local preachers, and representatives of the people chosen from the local preachers, leaders, trustees, (being members,) and other experienced persons from our different societies. Each society sends one or more representatives according to the number of its members. Any member of society has free admission to the quarterly meetings, with liberty to give his opinion, but without the power to vote. It is the business of the quarterly meeting to pay the preachers' salaries, — to determine the amount that each society is to contribute for the support of the ministry, — to make bye-laws for its own regulation, and for the management of the circuit, providing they do not contravene the rules of the Connexion, — to appoint persons to make the preachers' plans for the circuit, — to recommend local preachers to be taken into the regular ministry, — to determine respecting the qualifications of candidates for the *local* ministry, — and to examine and decide upon the affairs, both temporal and spiritual, of the circuit generally.

“ 4. Leaders' meetings. These consist of leaders, society stewards, one or more of the circuit preachers, a male representative for each of the female, and circuit preachers' classes, and a representative from the trustees of the chapel, provided such representative be a member of society. Leaders' meetings are held weekly, or once a fortnight, and regulate the affairs of each society and place of worship. It is the province of these meetings to inspect the class books and receive the weekly or other payments, — to inquire after the sick or absent members, that they may be visited, — to determine on notices for the pulpit, — to fix the hours of public worship and appoint the times for making the collections for its support, — to recommend persons to act

as exhorters or local preachers, — to judge and decide upon the fitness of candidates for church-membership, — to ascertain whether any members are walking disorderly, — and prayerfully to devise plans for the advancement of the work of God, and for the general improvement of society.”

From this view it will be seen that while the circuit preachers, as the chief pastors of the church, have the honour of presiding in the respective meetings, and a corresponding power of salutary control over their proceedings, — and while they are left in the full exercise of their functions, as ministers, to declare, on every subject, both the mind of Christ and the conventional regulations of the community, and to urge obedience thereto by exhortation and command, entreaty and remonstrance, yet they are not made sole judges either of law or fact, much less are they invested with exclusive legislative or executive authority. In the higher meetings, the churches have their freely chosen representatives, by whose means they have the most perfect access, and an equality of power with the ministry. In the quarterly or circuit meetings, the circuit officers and the representatives of the respective societies, — chosen by them, generally, on account of their standing in the church, their piety, wisdom, and ability to govern, — are associated with the preachers, and form, with them, one assembly, to whose concurrent judgement every measure is submitted and by which judgement it is determined. And in the leaders' meetings, a similar association of the stated ministry is formed with a class of men who are required to possess “ the following qualifications : sound Christian experience ; holiness of life ; clear views of the doctrines of the gospel ; that degree of aptness to teach which will render them acceptable ; approved stability and attachment to our system ; a firm determination to maintain our discipline ; affection for the souls committed to their care ; and a full determination to be useful in their respective classes, to their brethren, and in the world : ”—men, too, who are of the people, — selected by them, and necessarily identified with them in *feelings* and interests ; and who form, with the ministry,

an efficient pastorate, and a disinterested and competent tribunal. Or, should human frailty under peculiar circumstances lead to erroneous judgements, the aggrieved or injured may seek the intervention of another tribunal into which the same principle of liberty is transfused. This principle regulates the composition of all committees and other meetings, whether connexional or local ; whether for the management of the funds of the community or the regulation of any other of its affairs.

Such is, in fact, the system of government established in the Methodist New Connexion : a system which not only *asserts* the principle, 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 ;” but also embodies it in its entire system of law, — and introduces it into every meeting, whether general or local, for the regulation of its affairs : thus gives to it life and power, and a scope so wide as is sufficient effectually to prevent the establishment of a hierarchical despotism, while ample scope is left for the due performance of the functions of the stated ministry.

How far this harmonizes with the legislation and facts furnished by the New Testament, — the constitution of the first Christian churches, as there represented, — the ecclesiastical order of evangelical churches in subsequent periods — and the dictates of enlightened reason, we shall proceed to enquire in the next chapter.

The following remarks by Dr. Davidson, in his able lectures on Ecclesiastical Polity, published since the preceding article was written, place both the obligations and discretionary power of churches in matters of government, in a light so illustrative and confirmatory of some of the principles adduced in that article, as to justify, if not to require their insertion.

“The religion of Christ is occupied with general principles applicable to all the circumstances in which his people can be placed. Under the ancient dispensation they

were treated as children in a state of pupilage ; and therefore specific directions were given them on all points relating to faith and worship. But under the spiritual economy introduced by Christ, moral precepts are laid down, whose application to particular cases is left to the judgement of Christians. If, then, nothing relating to the external order of churches be left to discretion, there is an anomaly in the mode of teaching adopted in the New Testament. There is a departure from the ordinary mode of instruction which it follows : its characteristic peculiarity is abandoned.

“ We hesitate not to express our belief that there are the *essentials* and the *circumstantials* — the things that may not be accommodated to times, places, and circumstances—and those that may be so. No strict mathematical line is drawn between them, because that would be out of place in moral subjects. In distinguishing between the unchangeable and the mutable, Christian wisdom is fairly and properly exercised. Men endowed with sense, reason, and reflection, are to judge of the general features, as distinguished from the minor matters to which no importance attaches.

“ The expression, *legislation*, is not fairly applicable to our view, and, therefore, we disclaim it. And that we impugn the sufficiency of scripture is not true. It is a *sufficient* guide in all things pertaining to the nature and acts of God’s worship ; though silent as to many attendant circumstances belonging to that worship. General principles, comprehending particular cases, are enumerated. In the application of these, it is true that abuses may be introduced ; but that is no valid argument against them. ‘ Let all things be done to edifying.’ ‘ Let all things be done decently and in order.’ The wisdom of the Christian will keep such directions in mind. He will look at the tendency of every measure that may be introduced in the government of churches ; and should it contribute to the edifying of the society, or to its proper compactness, symmetry, and increase, he will not hesitate to adopt it as accordant with the mind of Christ.” “ Apostolic precept and example are our *ultimate appeal*, but not after a mechanical fashion. We

follow scripture analogy, using our reason and discretion. We apply the general precepts to all cases that may arise ; and are more attentive to the *spirit* of forms than to their *letter*."

The preceding views having been impugned in a religious periodical, (the *Eclectic Review*) are thus ably supported : —

"For the sake of our common Congregationalism, I regret to observe indications of a disposition unfriendly to reform in the right administration of our polity, not to say unfavourable to the least change in the nature of that polity itself.

"1. I begin with the observation, that our Reviewers generally evince very little disposition to grapple with the difficult question : 'By what right do you assume that all approved apostolic usages and practices are obligatory on succeeding Christians?' I can appreciate their motive for not assenting to the least departure from such precedents, lest something important might possibly be conceded ; but I cannot praise their judgement equally with their conscientious scruples.

"I have argued, that the form of church polity is one, *i.e.*, one in body and essence ; but that along with this substantial oneness of features it possesses minor things that are variable. I have argued, that the rule may be departed from in the latter, while the former should be retained. The former alone constitute what may be appropriately termed the model ; but the latter are the filling up of the outline model, and may be freely changed according to the circumstances of society, or of the churches themselves. I have thus endeavoured to show, that there is one form of ecclesiastical polity for all ages,—a somewhat bold and naked form, consisting, of a very few general things,—but that the filling up of it is left to the discretion of Christians at different times.

"I have reasoned against a diversity of spiritual vehicles, meaning vehicles in which the essential elements are different ; but I have not said a word against different vehicles which retain unimpaired the essential lines portrayed in the New Testament, along with a variety of minor features

and colours that serve to complete the former. The term model is, of course, properly applicable to the former alone; the latter constituting no true part of it. Thus the polity of the New Testament is variable in some things but unchanging in others; or it is better, perhaps, to restrict the term polity to the unalterable features alone. I did not, however, so restrict it; and hence the Reviewer has misapprehended my meaning. The reason why I did not limit it thus was, because the parts which I consider unchanging are mentioned very much in the same way as those which I look upon as unalterable. There is no palpable or manifest line drawn between them in the New Testament itself.

“2. I am charged by the Reviewer with confounding ‘matters of social convenience with the Christian polity.’ Here I wish he had defined matters of social convenience as distinguished from the Christian polity. In my apprehension, the Christian polity consists of such matters. It is nothing else than a number of regulations and practices connected with and tending to the social convenience of Christians, enjoined by Divine authority at first, or allowed to remain after having been instituted by Christians from their own ideas of propriety. Nor am I aware of any other view that has been entertained by those who have studied the subject. The same charge is repeated in another place. I am accused of ‘regarding those things as matters of Christian polity which do not belong to it; and then reasoning from one to the other.’ Here, too, I should like to know what the writer means by Christian polity as separated from things not belonging to it. It is easy to take refuge in an undefined something, and then to blame an author for confounding things that differ; but I shall wait for a precise and unambiguous answer to the question: ‘What are the things belonging to the Christian polity, and what are those that do not properly form a part of it?’

“3. One should be inclined to suppose from the Reviewer’s remarks, that the polity of the New Testament is a thing which is plain and easily discovered. The tenor of the review appears to me to justify this observation. But

let any one sit down to study the subject, not to write a review of it, and he will soon find that there is about it a good deal of vagueness. I am ready to maintain, that there is considerable uncertainty about the nature of some things which must belong to polity, even in the eyes of the Reviewer — an uncertainty which research cannot dissipate. Hence, I am unable to see how the divine wisdom, in leaving such things in so much obscurity — an obscurity not created by man, but inherent in their very nature from the mode in which they are noticed, can be justified by such as maintain that they should be observed as fully and faithfully as are the ordinances most clearly enjoined on all the churches to the end of the world.

“4. I presume that the Reviewer is the one minister of a Congregational Church; if he be not, he is at least the representative of the opinions of a large class of such preachers among us. He gives utterance to the sentiments of a great many ministers of the Congregational order, who maintain, with Dr. Wardlaw, that ‘what was actually done under apostolic direction has the same force of authority with an express command to do it, — the force, that is, of the authority of Christ: as we cannot suppose the apostles speaking in one way and acting in another, or any thing to have been done under their eye, relative to the order of the churches but what was according to their injunction, fact becomes the same as precept, example as law.’ Now, I wish that such persons were consistent with themselves before bringing a charge of inconsistency against others. Let them point out in the New Testament a Christian church with only one elder. Those who contend for the binding nature of every thing apostolic in the churches, and are themselves the single pastors of single churches, should first show their own conformity to the primitive model in this respect. I have endeavoured to prove that there was a plurality of pastors in the primitive churches: why do they not refuse my arguments or return to the original standard? Men are best judged by their deeds; and if they, being elders, continue all their life in a condition

unlike the primitive elders, and at the same time argue strongly for precise adherence to all apostolic institutions, shrewd men will be inclined to suspect their sincerity.

“ Let the same observation be applied to the office of deaconess. Why has it been laid aside ?

“ It appears to me, that nothing shows the untenable nature of the view entertained by the Eclectic reviewer and Dr. Wardlaw more effectually than the tenor of the remarks made by the latter on the love-feasts, or *agapæ*, existing in the early churches ; and on the kiss of charity. That there were *agapæ* in the Corinthian church when Paul wrote his First Epistle to it, appears to me unquestionable. Nor am I aware of any commentator, deserving the name, who has attempted to deny it. Dr. Wardlaw, however, pressed by his own hypothesis, endeavours to clear away these social meals from the eleventh chapter of the first epistle, in a manner contrary to all the exegetical rules with which I am acquainted. The same process, however, by which they are excluded from that epistle, will unavoidably exclude the Lord's supper. The supper of love and the supper of the Lord were both together from the first. Both were united in the Corinthian church, and most probably in the first church at Jerusalem. Both had a common appellation. There is thus the same evidence for these love-feasts being observed by the early Corinthian Christians, at least in their church capacity, as there is for the Lord's Supper being observed by them in the same capacity. Why, then, have the reviewer and Dr. Wardlaw laid aside the *agapæ*, and not the Lord's Supper ? It is vain to say, that the apostle Paul prohibited the former in the language, ‘ What ! have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not ? ’ These words prohibit the excesses in which the Corinthians had indulged by abusing such social meals.

“ Again : I cannot by any means perceive the truth or force of Dr. Wardlaw's remarks regarding the kiss of charity. Agreeably to his theory, he must get rid of it, as well as of the *agapæ*. Mr. Walker showed, long ago, that this kiss of

charity is as much an apostolic ordinance as any of those which Dr. Wardlaw holds to be binding; and I am rather surprised, that the latter should not have attempted to meet his arguments. To me they appear to be incontrovertible. Now, on the principles advocated by the reviewer, the form of this precept to salute one another with a kiss of charity should be rigidly maintained, since the spirit of the form is nothing, in his opinion, apart from the letter. I think that the friendly shaking of hands is in accordance with the precept, at least with the spirit of it, which is, in my opinion, all that it is worth; and I leave it to him to stand by the unalterable form."

CHAPTER IV.

CHRIST'S AUTHORITY IN THE CHURCH SUPREME AND INVIO-
LABLE. — THE FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCHES FORMED ON THE
GENERAL MODEL OF THE JEWISH SYNAGOGUE — THE CON-
STITUTION OF THE SYNAGOGUE — LAY-ELDERS WERE ASSOCI-
ATED THERE WITH THE RELIGIOUS TEACHERS — A SIMILAR
ASSOCIATION WAS ESTABLISHED IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCHES
— THE PEOPLE HAD A VOICE IN THE ELECTION AND REMO-
VAL OF OFFICERS, AND IN THE ENACTMENT AND ADMINISTRA-
TION OF LAWS, ETC. — OBJECTIONS ANSWERED — A SIMILAR
ASSOCIATION EXISTED IN THE POST-APOSTOLIC CHURCHES
AND IN THE REFORMED CHURCHES GENERALLY THROUGHOUT
CHRISTENDOM — CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.

ALTHOUGH the statements already made may sufficiently show the views generally held by the Methodists of the New Connexion, on the respect due to apostolic authority and the constitution of the apostolic churches, in matters of ecclesiastical polity, yet the following general remarks may serve in some instances to rectify, and in others to prevent misapprehension, and may, at the same time, appropriately introduce the subject of this chapter.

The Christian church being an association not purely voluntary, but formed by the command of him who is the only Saviour, and will be the universal Judge, his authority is, and must be, absolute, and his law imperative; and to whatever extent his will is revealed in relation either to the objects for the accomplishment of which the community was formed, — or to the personal duties of its members, — or to the functions and responsibilities of its officers, the obligation to learn and obey is indispensable. The meaning of the law, its perpetuity, and its correct administration, may be legitimate subjects of investigation and judgement; but the intention of the Lawgiver being ascertained, the only remaining duty must be obedience; and the rejection, whether practical or verbal, of such a law, either by any member, or officer, or by the entire community, must be treason or rebellion against the supreme governor. And as no power exists in the community to *abolish* the laws enacted by its Lawgiver and Judge, so neither can it have authority to form such combinations, or to make such minor arrangements as shall virtually *suspend* them, or counteract their design: as this would be, more circuitously, indeed, but not less effectually, to destroy the authority of the Lawgiver and defeat the purposes of his government. Though, therefore, there must exist, and, as has been shown, does exist, in the community a sphere within which legislation is requisite, and a corresponding power to adapt circumstances to necessities arising out of times, and places, and diversified social combinations; yet even this power is to be exercised not antagonistically to the purposes and enactments of the supreme authority, but only in perfect harmony with them; and so as not to destroy, but to preserve the privileges vested by Zion's King, in the various classes of the subjects of his empire.

With the foregoing principles in view, it is not difficult to understand the essential difference in the relations sustained by Christ and his apostles to the Christian church, and those sustained by all succeeding officers. So perfectly were the apostles identified with their Divine Master, as to be

little more, in the government of the churches, than the passive instruments of his will ; announcing *his* purposes ; working by *his* power ; and exercising *his* authority. To demonstrate the existence of that authority, the power of working miracles was given ; and to fit for its exercise, they were the subjects of the plenary inspiration of the Holy Spirit. On every question, therefore, of Christian doctrine, or privilege, or duty, their decision was supremely authoritative, and from their decisions there lay no appeal. They were entitled to exercise an authority which devolves not on any successors : and to them submission is due which it would be weakness or impiety to render to any others. But though *lawgivers*, they were also *ensamples* to the flock ; and, while in the exercise of their divine prerogative, they promulgated the laws by which the community was to be formed and governed ; they also, in the meekness of wisdom, practically exemplified to the infant churches how those laws were to be administered. Jealous of the honour of their Master, and which was entirely identified with that apostolic character wherewith he had invested them, — they authoritatively rebuked or condemned the disorderly, or judicially or miraculously punished the proudly rebellious ; but, imbued with the meek and lowly spirit of their Master, they at the same time honoured the lowest and feeblest of his servants as their brethren ; and associated with themselves in the practical government of the church, those from whom, the unrivalled character they sustained, and the splendours of its distinguishing endowments, seemed to place them at the greatest distance. Thus, as will be seen, did they maintain the honour both of their Master's supremacy, and of the character which, under him, they bore ; while they set forth, in practical recognition, the duties and privileges of the other classes embodied in the Christian church.

The extent to which the other officers or members of the apostolic churches were allowed to share in the functions of government, in the election of officers, the administration of discipline, and the establishment of such minor regulations as the churches were allowed to make, and which

order and convenience required, is one of those questions on which, even in the best portions of the Christian church, great diversity of sentiment has existed, and yet exists. It is, however, a fact, that the great majority of those whose attention has been most fully directed to the history of the Christian church, and whose literary acquirements, depth of research, and soundness of judgement, have obtained for them, — what they seem to merit, — the greatest deference on subjects both of verbal criticism and historic fact, agree in their testimony that the government of the first churches was popular, at least to a great extent, and that the doctrine, that government, *in any of its branches*, was vested exclusively in the hands of a particular class of teachers, was both theoretically and practically unrecognized.

That in the formation of the first Christian churches the apostles were not directed to bring into existence religious assemblies, classes of officers, and modes of governmental administration, *entirely new*, is a fact not only clearly established, but the high improbability of which is at once seen in the intimate and important relation in which Christianity stood to Judaism; — an economy under which the apostles had been trained — with which all their early religious associations were blended — and the divine establishment of which they still continued firmly to maintain. Both in their view, and in fact, Christianity was but the filling up of a previous system in which all the great outlines of the prototype had been strongly traced, and even its finer and more characteristic lineaments portrayed with varying degrees of distinctness, in the announcements of prophecy — the typical institutions of an imposing ceremonial, — and lastly, in the institutions of that synagogue, in the worship of which, both the Head of the Christian church and the apostles had stately joined, and in connection with which were achieved some of their earliest and most signal triumphs. That divine wisdom, therefore, which never employs the *supernatural*, when *other means* are provided, would leave the apostles to apply the various parts of the *machinery* thus furnished, so far as they were adapted to

the purposes of the more perfect economy; and would interfere supernaturally to supply only what was lacking. That, acting on a principle so accordant with every dictate of wisdom, and with the rules which regulate the exercise of supernatural agencies, the apostles were left to transfer, and did in fact transfer the worship and government of the synagogue to the Christian assemblies, with such additions only as the necessities of Christianity required, is maintained by the great majority of those writers whose judgement on such a subject is entitled to the highest respect. Among these may be classed Lightfoot, Spencer, Grotius, Vitranga, Burnett, Stillingfleet — and, among later writers, Watson, Neander, Miller, Barnes, Whateley, Candlish, Coleman, and Halley. The following passages will serve to show not only the judgements formed, but the ground also on which they rest.

“With the temple service and the Mosaic ritual, Christianity had no affinity. The sacrificial offerings of the temple, and the Levitical priesthood, it abolished. But in the synagogue worship, the followers of Christ found a more congenial institution. It invited them to the reading of the scriptures, and to prayer. It gave them liberty of speech in exhortation, and in worshipping and praising God. The rules and government of the synagogue, while they offered little, comparatively, to excite the pride of office and of power, commended themselves the more to the humble believer in Christ. The synagogue was endeared to the devout Jew by sacred associations and tender recollections. It was near at hand, and not, like the temple, afar off. He went but seldom up to Jerusalem, and only on great occasions joined in the rites of the temple service. But in the synagogue he paid his constant devotions to the God of his fathers. It met his eye in every place. It was constantly before him, and from infancy to hoary age, he was accustomed to repair to that hallowed place of worship, to listen to the reading of his sacred books, to pray and sing praises unto the God of Israel. In accordance with pious usage, therefore, the apostles continued to frequent the synagogues

of the Jews. Wherever they went, they resorted to these places of worship, and strove to convert their brethren to faith in Christ, not as a new religion, but as a modification of their own.

“ In their own religious assemblies they also conformed, as far as was consistent with the spirit of the Christian religion, to the same rites, and gradually settled upon a church organization which harmonized, in a remarkable manner, with that of the Jewish synagogue. They even retained the same *name*, as the appellation of their Christian assemblies. ‘ If there come into your assembly συναγωγῆς if there come into your *synagogue* a man with a gold ring, &c.’ James ii. 2. Compare also συναγωγῆς Heb. x. 25. Their modes of worship were, substantially, the same as those of the synagogue. The *titles of their officers* they also borrowed from the same source. The titles, Bishop, Pastor, Presbyter, &c., were all familiar to them as synonymous terms, denoting the same class of officers in the synagogue. Their duties and prerogatives remained, in substance, the same in the Christian church as in that of the Jews. So great was this similarity between the primitive Christian churches and the Jewish synagogues, that by the Pagan nations they were mistaken for the same institutions. Pagan historians uniformly treated the primitive Christians as Jews. As such they suffered under the persecutions of their idolatrous rulers. These, and many other particulars that might be mentioned, are sufficient to show, that the ecclesiastical polity of the Jewish synagogue was very closely copied by the apostles and primitive Christians in the organization of their assemblies.*

“ The disciples had not yet obtained a clear understanding of that call, which Christ had already given them by so many intimations, to form a church entirely separated from the existing Jewish economy ; to that economy they adhered as much as possible ; all the forms of the national theocracy were sacred in their esteem ; it seemed the natural element

of their religious consciousness, though a higher principle of life had been imparted, by which that consciousness was to be progressively inspired and transformed. They remained outwardly Jews, although, in proportion as their faith in Jesus as the Redeemer became clearer and stronger, they would inwardly cease to be Jews, and all external rites would assume a different relation to their internal life. It was their belief that the existing religious forms would continue till the second coming of Christ, when a new and higher order of things would be established, and this great change they expected would shortly take place. Hence the establishment of a distinct mode of worship was far from entering their thoughts. Although new ideas respecting the essence of true worship arose in their minds from the light of faith in the Redeemer, they felt as great an interest in the temple worship as any devout Jews. They believed, however, that a sifting would take place among the members of the theocracy, and that the better part would, by the acknowledgement of Jesus as the Messiah, be incorporated with the Christian community. As the believers, in opposition to the mass of the Jewish nation who remained hardened in their unbelief, now formed a community internally bound together by the one faith in Jesus as the Messiah, and by the consciousness of the higher life received from him, it was necessary that this internal union should assume a certain external form. And a model for such a smaller community within the great national theocracy already existed among the Jews, along with the temple worship, namely, the synagogues. The means of religious edification which they supplied, took account of the religious welfare of all, and consisted of united prayers and addresses of individuals who applied themselves to the study of the Old Testament. These means of edification closely corresponded to the nature of the new Christian worship. This form of social worship, as it was copied in all the religious communities founded on Judaism (such as the Essenes,) was also adopted, to a certain extent, at the first formation of the Christian church. But it may be disputed, whether

the apostles, to whom Christ committed the chief direction of affairs, designed from the first that believers should form a society exactly on the model of the synagogue, and in pursuance of this plan, instituted particular offices for the government of the church corresponding to that model — or whether, without such a preconceived plan, distinct officers were appointed, as circumstances required, in doing which they would avail themselves of the model of the synagogue with which they were familiar.*

“ It is probable that one cause, humanly speaking, why we find in the sacred books less information concerning the Christian ministry and the constitution of church governments than we otherwise might have found, is that these institutions had less of *novelty* than some would at first sight suppose, and that many portions of them did not wholly originate with the apostles. It appears highly probable, — I might say, morally certain, — that wherever a Jewish synagogue existed, that was brought, the whole or chief part of it, to embrace the gospel, the apostles did not there, so much *form* a Christian church (or congregation) *as make an existing congregation Christian*; by introducing the Christian sacraments and worship, and establishing whatever regulations were requisite for the newly-adopted faith; leaving the machinery (if I may so speak) of government unchanged; the rulers of the synagogues, elders, and other officers (whether spiritual, or ecclesiastical, or both,) being already provided in the existing institutions. And it is likely that several of the earliest christian churches did originate in this way; that is, that they were converted synagogues; which became christian churches as soon as the members, or the main part of the members, acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah.

“ The attempt to effect this conversion of a Jewish synagogue into a christian church seems always to have been made, in the first instance, in every place where there was an opening for it. Even after the call of the idolatrous

* Meander.

Gentiles, it appears plainly to have been the practice of the apostles Paul and Barnabas, when they came to any city, in which there was a synagogue, to go thither first and deliver their sacred message to the Jews and devout (or proselyte) Gentiles; according to their own expression (Acts xiii. 17) to the 'men of Israel and those that feared God:' adding, that 'it was necessary that the word of God should first be preached to them.' And when they founded a church in any of those cities in which (and such were, probably, a very large majority) there was no Jewish synagogue that received the gospel, it is likely they would still conform in a great measure to the same model."*

"The temple service, and the whole priestly hierarchy connected with it being for ever set aside, the model or platform of the christian discipline and administration, was undeniably the usage of the synagogues; and beyond all question, that system savoured far more of the principle of republican self-regulation; each society with its own officers, exercising a large discretion in the regulation of its own services and the management of its own affairs, than of any general and uniform submission to one order or to one head."†

"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 minister of the synagogue, who superintended the public service; directed those that read the scriptures, and offered up the 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

* Whateley.

† Candlish.

elevated *in order* above the rest. The angel of the church, and the minister of the synagogue, might be the same as he who was invested with the office of president; or these offices might be held by others of the elders. Lightfoot, indeed, states that the rulers of each synagogue were three, whilst the presbyters or elders were ten. To this council of grave and wise men, the affairs of the synagogue, both as to worship and discipline were committed. In the synagogue they sat by themselves in a semicircle, and the people before them, face to face. This was the precise form in which the Bishop and Presbyters used to sit in the primitive churches.*

On the *constitution* of synagogues, Professor Miller observes: —

“ When the synagogue service was instituted, is a question which has been so much controverted, and is of so much real uncertainty, that the discussion of it will not be attempted in this place, especially as it is a question of no sort of importance in the inquiry now before us. All that it is necessary for us to assume is, that it existed at the time of our Lord’s advent, and for a considerable time before, and that the Jews had been long accustomed to its order and worship; which no one, it is presumed, will think of questioning. Now, whatever might have been its origin, nothing can be more certain, than that, from the earliest notices we have of the institution, and through its whole history, its leading officers consisted of a bench of elders, who were appointed to bear rule in the congregation; who formed a kind of consistory, or ecclesiastical judicatory;— to receive applicants for admission into the church; to watch over the people, as well in reference to their morals, as their obedience to ceremonial and ecclesiastical order; to administer discipline when necessary; and in short, as the representatives of the church or congregation, to act in their name, and behalf; to ‘bind’ and ‘loose,’ and to see that every thing was “ done decently and in order.” †

* Watson

† Miller.

“The mode of conducting religious instruction and worship at the present day in Christian churches is derived for the most part from practices which anciently prevailed in synagogues. And still there were no regular teachers in them, who were officially qualified to pronounce discourses before the people, although there were interpreters, who rendered into the vernacular tongue — viz, the *Hebræo-aramæan* — the sections which had been publicly read in the Hebrew. The synagogue preacher, whose business it is, in consequence of his office, to address the people, is an official personage that has been introduced in later times; at least we find no mention of such a one in the New Testament. On the contrary, in the time of Christ, the person who read the section for the Sabbath, or any other person who was respectable for learning, and had a readiness of speech, addressed the people. Luke iv. 16-21. Acts xiii. 5-15; xv. 21. Matt. iv. 23. The other persons who were employed in the services and government of the synagogue, in addition to the one who read the scriptures, and the person who rendered them into the vernacular tongue, were as follows:—

“I. The ruler of the synagogue, who presided over the assembly, and invited readers and speakers, unless some persons who were acceptable voluntarily offered themselves Mark v. 22, 35-38. Luke viii. 41, xiii. 14, 15. Acts xiii. 15.

“II. The elders of the synagogue.—They appear to have been the counsellors of the head or ruler of the synagogue, and were chosen from among the most powerful and learned of the people, Acts xiii. 15. The council of elders not only took a part in the management of the internal concerns of the synagogue, but also punished transgressors of the public *laws*, either by turning them out of the synagogue, or decreeing the punishment of thirty-nine stripes. John, xii. 42; xvi. 2; 2 Cor. xi. 24.

“III. The collectors of alms, deacons.—Although every thing which is said of them by the Jews was not true concerning them in the time of the apostles, there can be no doubt that there were such officers in the synagogues at that time. Acts vi. 1. *et seq.*

“ IV. *The servants of the synagogue*, (Luke iv. 20) whose business it was to reach the book of the law to the person who was to read it, and to receive it back again, and to perform other services. The ceremonies which prevail in the synagogues at the present day in presenting the law were not observed in the time of our Saviour.

“ V. *The messenger or legate of the synagogue*. This was a person who was sent from synagogues abroad to carry alms to Jerusalem. Philip. ii. 25. 1 Cor. xvi. ̄. 4. This name, (messenger of the synagogue,) was applied likewise to any person who was commissioned by a synagogue and sent forth to propagate religious knowledge. Acts xiv. 4. Rom. xvi. 7. 2 Cor. viii. 2. 3. The person likewise was denominated *the messenger*, who was selected by the assembly to recite for them the prayers; the same that is called by the Jews in modern times the *synagogue-singer*, or *cantillator*. Rev. ii. 1, 8, 12, 18. iii. 1, 7, 14.

“ Note.—The Jews anciently called those persons who, from their superior erudition, were capable of teaching in the synagogue, *shepherds* or *pastors*. They applied the same term, at least in more recent times, to the *elders of the synagogue*, and also to the *collectors of alms* or *deacons*.*.”

To this Watson has added :—

“ We do not find mention made of public worship in the synagogues, except on the Sabbath. Matt. xii. 9. Mark i. 21, iii. 1; vi. 2. Luke iv. 16, 32, 33; vi. 6; xiii. 10. Acts xiii. 14; xv. 21; xvi. 13-25; xvii. 2; xviii. 4. What is said of St. Paul's hiring the school of one Tyrannus at Ephesus, and teaching in it daily, is a peculiar instance, Acts xix. 9, 10. Yet there can be no doubt that those Jews who were unable to go to Jerusalem attended worship on their festival days, as well as on the Sabbath, in their own synagogues. Individuals sometimes offered their private prayers in their synagogues. When an assembly was collected together for worship, the services began, after the customary greeting, with a doxology. A section was then read from the Mosaic

* Jahn.

law. Then followed, after the singing of a second doxology, the reading of a portion from the prophets, Acts. xv. 31. Luke iv. 16. The person whose duty it was to perform the reading, placed upon his head, as is done in the present day, a covering called *tallith*, to which St. Paul alludes, 2 Cor. iii. 15. The sections which had been read in the Hebrew were rendered by an interpreter into the vernacular tongue, and the reader, or some other man then addressed the people, Luke iv. 16; Acts xiii. 15. It was on such occasions as these, that Jesus, and afterwards the apostles, taught the gospel. The meeting, as far as the religious exercises were concerned, was ended with a prayer, to which the people responded Amen, when a collection was taken for the poor.

“It was by ministering in synagogues that the apostles gathered the churches. They retained also essentially the same mode of worship with that of the synagogues, excepting that the Lord’s supper was made an additional institution, agreeably to the example of Christ. Acts ii. 42; xx. 7-11; 1 Cor. xi. 16-34. They were at length excluded from the synagogue, and assembled at evening in the house of some Christian, which was lighted for the purpose with lamps. Acts xx. 7-11. The apostle, with the elders, when engaged in public worship, took a position where they would be most likely to be heard by all. The first service was merely a salutation or blessing, namely, “The Lord be with you,” or, “Peace be with you.” Then followed the doxologies and prelections, the same as in the synagogues. The apostle then addressed the people on the subject of religion, and urged upon them that purity of life which it required. Prayer succeeded, which was followed by the commemoration of the Saviour’s death in the breaking and distribution of bread, The meeting was ended by taking a collection for the poor, especially those at Jerusalem. 2 Cor. ix. 1-15.”

Lightfoot, one of the highest authorities on such a subject, describing the worship in the Jewish synagogue, states — “In the body of the church the congregation met, and prayed and heard the law, and the manner of their sitting

was this:—The elders sat near the chancel, with their faces down the church; and the people sat one form behind another, with their faces up the church, towards the chancel and the elders. Of these elders there were some that had rule and office in the synagogue, and some that had not. And this distinction the apostle seemeth to allude unto, in that much disputed text, 1 Tim. v. xviii. ‘The elders that rule well,’ &c.; where ‘the elders that ruled well’ are set not only in opposition to those that ruled ill, but to those that ruled *not at all*. We may see then, whence these titles and epithets in the New Testament are taken, namely, from the common platform and constitution of the synagogues, where *Angelus*, *Ecclesia*, and *Episcopus* were terms of so ordinary use and knowledge. And we may observe from whence the apostle taketh his expressions, when he speaketh of some elders ruling, and labouring in word and doctrine, and some not; namely, from the same platform and constitution of the synagogue, where the ruler of the synagogue, was more singularly for ruling the affairs of the synagogue, and ‘the minister of the congregation,’ labouring in the word, and reading the law, and in doctrine about the preaching of it. Both these together are sometimes called jointly, ‘the rulers of the synagogue;’ Acts xiii. 15; Mark v. 22; being both elders that ruled; but the title is more singularly given to the first of them.

“In all the Jews’ synagogues there were *Parnasin*, deacons, or such as had care of the poor, whose work it was to gather alms for them, and distribute it to them. That needful office is here (Acts vi.) translated into the Christian church.

“Though, therefore, some learned writers suppose the rulers of the synagogues to have all received the same sort of ordination, and to have been all entitled by their office to discharge the same class of duties, yet the highest authorities are agreed in admitting, that some rulers of the synagogue confined their attention to the regulation of its affairs, and that only some of them adventured on a public exposition of the scriptures.”*

* King

Here, then, are found what may be denominated *lay-elders* associated with the chief ruler and the public religious teachers, in the entire government of these Jewish churches; and, excepting the duties and honours of the presidency, exercising equal power with them. And if the apostles formed the first Christian churches agreeably to the *general platform* only of these assemblies, then may we expect to find a similar association in the churches of the New Testament; or an associated governing eldership, similar to the leaders' meetings of the Methodist New Connexion. And this association found, the exclusive right, with its exclusive responsibilities, so often claimed on behalf of the stated public ministers, to admit to church fellowship or remove from it, not according to the collective judgement of the associated body, but according to their own; or at least to exercise the power of veto whenever they may deem it right to do so—entirely disappears; and equal rights, with their correspondent responsibilities are possessed by all. A *great principle* is also thus established, the legitimate application of which, in some form, is *universal*, and the practical working of which is likely to be every where seen. Thus, the question, whether the principle of religious liberty adopted by the Methodist New Connexion, and embodied, as has been shown, in its entire system of government, is in harmony with apostolic precedent—is intimately connected with the question, whether any such association as existed in the Jewish synagogue, was established in the first Christian churches? And if in the New Testament, and in the writings of antiquity the most satisfactory evidence be found that it was established there,—and evidence which has in fact, commanded the assent of men the most eminent for learning, and has also led the purest and most ancient churches to the adoption of a similar association,—then, the great principle for which the fathers of the community so nobly contended, and which they so fully embodied in its entire system of polity, rests on the surest foundation,—the word of God; and has the sanction of the highest authority,—Zion's supreme Lawgiver and King.

It will be at once conceded, that a question of such importance demands the fullest investigation which the space allotted to us will permit. And this question, happily for the cause of Christian truth, and of good government in the Christian church, has been thoroughly investigated by Dr. Miller, "Professor of Ecclesiastical History and Church Government, in the Theological Seminary, at Princeton, New Jersey." From his work on "The Ruling Elder," with a few additions from Drs. King and M'Kerrow, the testimonies adduced in support of the following reasonings are drawn; and in that work reference to the authorities will be found.

That the synagogue associated eldership was established in the apostolic churches, appears to follow from the fact — a fact apparently incompatible with pure independency — that in every church established by the apostles, not a solitary preaching elder, — but a *plurality* of elders, was appointed; and appointed for the purposes of both teaching and government. The New Testament, indeed, does not seem to furnish a single instance of the appointment of one elder alone to any church, however small, nor to adopt a mode of expression necessarily indicating that such an appointment was then ever made, or that such a church then existed. To this statement no exception is formed by the addresses to the Asiatic churches: for, as Lightfoot and others have observed, the "angel" of the Jewish synagogue was simply the president of the associated eldership. And that a plurality of elders existed in one of those churches, — the church at Ephesus, — is demonstrated by the fact, that St. Paul, when on his journey to Jerusalem, sent for — not a solitary individual, the "angel" or bishop, — but *the elders* of that church, to meet him at Miletus. Bishop Stillingfleet, therefore, though an Episcopalian, has stated, — "If many things in the epistles be directed to the angel, but yet so as to concern the whole body, then of necessity the angel must be taken as a representative of the body; either of the whole church, or, which is far more probable, of *the concessus*, or order of presbyters in that church."

That the other churches so addressed had a similar eldership is rendered highly probable by this fact alone. But the probability would seem to be raised to certainty by the more general fact already stated;—that in the whole of the New Testament neither is any direction given to ordain a single elder to any church, however small, nor any record of such an ordination. In the history of the Acts, the apostles are seen appointing *elders*, not merely in every district, or city, but *in every church*: Acts xiv. 23; and Titus was directed to make a similar appointment in *every city*. The modes of expression uniformly adopted by the sacred writers are like the following:—

“And when they had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed. Acts xiv. 23.” “And when they were come to Jerusalem, they were received of the church, and of the apostles and *elders*. And the apostles and *elders* came together to consider of this matter. Acts xv. 4, 6.” “And from Miletus, he (Paul) sent to Ephesus, and called the *elders* of the Church; and when they were come unto him, he said unto them, take heed unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you *overseers*.” Acts xx. 20, 28. “Is any sick among you? let him call for the *elders* of the church, and let them pray over him,” &c.; James v. 14. “The *elders* which are among you I exhort, who am also an *elder*, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed. Feed the flock of God that is among you, taking the *oversight thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.” 1 Peter v. 1, 2, 3. “For this cause I left thee in Crete, that thou shouldst set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain *elders* in every city, as I have appointed thee.” Titus i. 5. “Obey *them* that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch for your souls as they that must give account.” Hebrews xiii. 17. “And we beseech you brethren, to know

them which labour among you, and are *over you* in the Lord, and admonish you, and to esteem them very highly in love for their works' sake." 1 Thess. v. 12, 13. "Let the *elders* that rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine;" 1 Tim. v. 17. "Thus, to whatever church our attention is directed in the inspired history, we find in it a plurality of elders: we find the mass of the church members spoken of as under their authority; and while the people are exhorted to submit to their rule, with all readiness and affection, those rulers are commanded, in the name of Christ, to exercise the power vested in them by the great Head of the Church, with firmness and fidelity, and yet with disinterestedness and moderation, so as to promote most effectually, the purity and order of the flock."

Geisler states, as the result of his researches, — "The duty of teaching as an office was by no means incumbent on the elders, although the apostle wishes that they should be *apt to teach*. 1 Tim. iii. 2. (2. Tim. ii. 24.) The capacity for instructing and edifying in the assemblies was rather considered as a free gift of the Spirit which manifested itself in many Christians, although in different modes. 1 Cor. xii. 28-31. xiv. Still less was a distinct priestly order known at this time; for the whole society of Christians formed a royal priesthood; 1 Peter ii. 9; God's peculiar people."

Neander thinks that "these churches in houses, belonging to one town, were established by different teachers, and without a common government. Baur (Pastoral-brief, s. 78, ff.) infers from Titus i. 5, that every church had but one elder, and that as several elders are represented as being in one city, each governed independently a particular church. The analogy of the synagogue, however, is in favour of the plurality of elders in a church; for the collection of the elders of one city into a college, and, consequently, of the churches in houses into one church, (even if every house-church, as every synagogue, had its particular elders,) those *passages speak* in which the collected elders of one city ap-

pear and act as a united whole. Compare Acts xv. 4 ; xx. 7 ; Phil. i. 1."

Dr. John Owen also writes thus : "The pattern of the first churches constituted by the apostles, which it is our duty to imitate and follow as our rule, constantly expresses and declares that many elders were appointed by them in every church. There is no mention in the scripture, no mention in antiquity, of any church wherein there was not more elders than one, nor doth that church answer the original pattern where it is otherwise."

Had this plurality of elders been appointed in large cities only, as Jerusalem and Antioch, it might with some appearance of reason be maintained that all were engaged in the public ministry of the word, either as independent pastors, or as forming a united pastorate ; but when it is seen that the same rule was applied to the *smallest* churches, — and some of which, as Clarkson has shown, (select works, p. 165) were in towns not larger than villages, and were necessarily few in the number of their members, the conclusion seems inevitable, — that, as in each Jewish synagogue, so in each Christian church, an associated eldership was formed for the joint purposes of teaching and government.

But the conclusion, that such an association did, in fact, exist in the apostolic churches, whether in imitation of the synagogue or not, is not left in the New Testament to inference alone, but appears to be distinctly and repeatedly asserted. These, among the supernatural gifts which the infantile state of the church required, and which had been promised both as the infallible proof, and the rich fruit, of the exaltation of its Divine Head to the right hand of the Father, *government* and *teaching*, as separate benefits bestowed on different persons, and singly exercised by them, occupy a prominent place. And the apostles, in establishing an order of things which was to continue when those supernatural bestowals had ceased, — and entering into the obvious design of their Master in such arrangement, — practically recognized the association. Rom. xii. 6-8, we read : — *Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is*

given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith ; or ministry, let us wait on our ministering ; or he that teacheth, on teaching ; or he that exhorteth, on exhortation ; he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity ; he that ruleth, with diligence ; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

That the different gifts here enumerated by the apostle are supposed by him to reside in *different* persons, is evinced not only by the modes of expression used, but more especially by the striking analogy employed for the purposes of illustration and enforcement. Having represented that all the functions of the animal economy in man are not performed by any one member ; but that, contrariwise, each member has its own peculiar function, and that the combination of all the members constitutes the body, he adds,— “ so we, being *many*, are one body in Christ, and every one members *one of another*.” How they were thus members, he immediately shows—they had “ gifts *differing* according to the grace given to them.” But unless each gift, — at least in the special measure there referred to, was confined to particular individuals,—as each bodily function is limited to its appropriate organ, — the bestowal of those gifts could not render them members one of another. The representation here made by the apostle is thus correctly drawn out by Dr. A. Clarke : — “ We who are members of the church of Christ, which is considered the *body* of which he is the *head*, have various offices assigned to us, according to the measure of grace, faith, and religious knowledge which we possess ; and, although each has a different office, and qualifications suitable to that office, yet all belong to the same body ; and each has as much need of the help of another as that other has of his ; therefore let there be neither *pride* on the one hand nor *envy* on the other.” The *gifts*, — together with the proper exercise of them, — are thus represented : — “ Whether prophecy, (speaking by special inspiration,) let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith ; or ministry, (the stated public ministry of the word) let us wait on our ministering ; or he that teacheth, (*instructs in the elements of Christianity ; perhaps more*

familiarly or privately: see Barnes and Dr. A. Clarke) on teaching; or he that exhorteth, (persuades to duty by entreaty, promise, threatening, &c.) on exhortation: he that giveth, (whose supernaturally enlarged heart bestows all its goods on the Church and the poor,) let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, (whose melting compassion, in all the diversities of its manifestations, specially fits him to relieve and sooth the suffering,) with cheerfulness." In this enumeration of endowments, the ruler is distinguished from the teacher and exhorter, as clearly as he is distinguished from the prophet; and that ruling, properly so called, is here meant, McKerrow thus proves: — "The expression ὁ προϊστάμενος in its literal acceptation, denotes a person who stands before another; and metaphorically it is employed to denote a ruler, or commander,—one who is invested with authority over others. Sometimes it denotes the ruler of a family. 1 Tim. iii. 4 — τοῦ ἰδίου οἴκου καλῶς προϊστάμενον "one that ruleth well his own house." Sometimes it denotes the ruler of a city — μεγάλης πρωτεύουσας πόλεως "He that ruleth over a great city." Sometimes it denotes the ruler of a nation: Αντιγονῶν προϊστάμενος Μακεδόνων "To Antigonus the ruler of the Macedonians." It is, therefore, quite in accordance with the classical application of this word, to find it employed in the New Testament, to denote those who rule in the Church: such as 1 Thess. v. 12, προϊσταμένους ὑμῶν ἐν Κυρίῳ "Your rulers in the Lord;" and in 1 Timothy, v. 17. Οἱ καλῶς προϊστάμενοι πρεσβυτέρους "The elders that rule well." I am, therefore fully justified in regarding it in the passage on which I am commenting, (Rom. xii. 8,) as descriptive of an office-bearer in the church that rules — and of one that only rules. Both Doddridge and Macknight translate it, in this passage, 'one who presides,' or 'president.' But this does not convey the full amount of its meaning here. A president may preside among equals. But this term is descriptive of one that bears rule over others; and it has been justly remarked, that if nothing more than a president had been meant by the apostle, the word employed would have been, not προϊστάμενος

but *επιπροσταταις*. The former of these implies a power of jurisdiction and government—the latter, a ‘precedence or placing of one thing before another,’ though it is admitted that the two terms are sometimes used indiscriminately.’ It is evident from this passage, that teaching, and ruling, are recognized as distinct gifts, and also that they are represented as exercised by different individuals; and there is here a direction given by the Spirit of God, as to the manner in which they were commanded to exercise their gifts; ‘He that teacheth let him wait on his teaching—and he that ruleth let him do it with diligence.’”

Peter Martyr, an eminent Italian reformer, and who was specially invited by Edward the sixth to visit England, and became Professor of Divinity at Oxford, having cited the passage, observes :

“Although I doubt not that there were many rulers in the church, yet, to confess the truth, this appears to me to be most aptly understood of elders; not, indeed, of those who presided over the dispensation of the word and doctrine; but of those who were given as assistants to pastors. These, as being prudent, zealous, and pious men, were chosen from the laity. Their business was to take charge principally of discipline — to see what every one did — and in every house and family to afford aid, as it was needed, whether for the mind or for the body. For the church had its elders, or so to speak, its senate, who consulted about things as the time demanded. Paul describes this sort of ministry, not only in this place, but also in his first epistle to Timothy; for he thus writes, “Elders are worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine.” By which words he seems to intimate, that there are some elders who teach and propound the word of God; and that there are others who, while they do not this, nevertheless preside in the church as presbyters or elders,”

“Dr. Thomas Goodwin, one of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, who ranks with the most learned Independents of the seventeenth century, says, in commenting on the twelfth chapter to the Romans, and more especially the

eighth verse—'Though to rule is a pastor's office as well as an elder's, yet the elder is more especially said to rule, because he is wholly set apart to it. It is his proper calling, which he is wholly appointed to mind, and in a special manner . . . Though the superior (officer) in common performs the same work with the inferior; yet the inferior is set apart to it wholly, which the other is not, but to some other of an higher kind, by reason of intending which he cannot so fully and wholly intend the other; and therefore, it is observable in speaking of a ruler's office in ruling, he says, 'let him do it with diligence,' for that is his work which he is to mind; and there will be enough of it to fill his hands.'

Another passage, strikingly similar to the preceding, is found, 1 Cor., xii. 28.—*And God hath set some in the church; first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers, after that miracles; then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues.*—This statement, like the former, is founded on a representation of the human body, as being indebted for its symmetry and capabilities to different members, each of which performs its specific function, yet all are so perfectly united as to have but one interest, and to be pervaded by one feeling of sympathy. But in this passage, as the representation of the body is more elaborately and beautifully drawn, so the *personal division* of the spiritual gifts is more particularly and strongly expressed. Not only are the Corinthians informed that they "are the body of Christ and members in particular," but also, that "God hath set some in the church," &c.—Here, as in the former passage, governments stand out as distinctly from "prophets and teachers" as the latter stand out from the "diversities of tongues." Dr. Lightfoot has, indeed, supposed that the governors may here mean discerners of spirits, because the same term is employed in the Septuagint to express wise counsels; as in Proverbs i. 5; xi. 14; and xxiv. 6. But in addition to the circumstance that "governments" in the one case correspond exactly to "him that ruleth" in the other, the counselling wisdom which the term is employed to express, in the passages adduced, finds in the functions

of *government*, one of its most important exercises, if not its most important one; and in two of those passages, such is, in fact, its application. "Where no counsel is, the people fall; but in much counsel there is safety. By wise counsel thou shalt make war." McKerrow, therefore, observes,— "The term here rendered *governments*, describes the management of the ship by the pilot, when, by means of the rudder and the compass, he directs its course through the deep.—These governments were none other than the ruling elders of the church. That they were *rulers*, the term itself implies.—They were rulers whom God had *set* or *appointed*. Further, they were rulers whom God had set in the church distinct from the teachers. Their business was merely to rule. . . . The apostle says, 'God hath set some in the church, first, apostles; secondarily, prophets; thirdly, teachers; &c.' According to the structure of this sentence, the word *some* is applicable to every clause in the verse; and the meaning of the apostle is the same as if he had said, 'God hath set some in the church, first, who are apostles; some in the church, secondarily, who are prophets; some in the church, thirdly, who are teachers; after that, some in the church who have the power of working miracles, &c.' That this is his meaning is obvious from the questions which he asks in the following verses, (29, 30) where he says—'Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? &c.' Here is a proof, then, that the teachers were a *distinct* class; for if they had not been so, then *all* had been teachers—which the apostle affirms they were not. But if they were distinct then they were a different class from the 'governments;' for if they had not been different, but one and the same, can we suppose that the apostle would have said, 'God hath set in the church, thirdly, teachers;' and after that, 'governments.' Who does not see that this language would be unmeaning—or, at most, a useless repetition, if the teachers and governments were identically the same? What possible *meaning* could we attach to the phrase, *after that*, if he were *merely* going to repeat what he had previously affirmed?"

Whatever of uncertainty may attach to *some* of the terms employed in the two passages thus examined, or whatever the diversity of meaning which commentators may give them, the great fact remains unaltered — that they denote spiritual gifts as distinct in their nature as the bodily functions of seeing, hearing, &c., and that the *persons* who were the subjects of those gifts were as distinct as the *organs* whereby different functions are performed. For the statements of the apostle in his epistle to the Romans are not, that the *gifts* only were various, for in that case, several, or all of them might have been bestowed on one person; and the churches presented instances, as the apostle well knew, in which this was so. But having to teach lessons of humility and mutual love, he enforced them by another fact which the state of the churches also presented, — that gifts were separately bestowed — divided among the many — and among the gifts so divided was that of “ruling.” To render this still more evident to the Corinthians, he states — that God had set not only “gifts,” but “persons;” — “apostles, prophets;” and among them are “helps and governments.”

It will not, however, follow from hence, that the individual who was thus the subject of some special gift was entirely destitute of every other; but only that in him such gift predominated above others, so as to constitute a special fitness for the performance of a corresponding spiritual function: much less will it follow, that no measure of the same gift was bestowed on any other members of the same church. With respect to some, at least, of those gifts, they were shared by others, though not in that abundant measure which constituted the fitness for a special department of duty. In some individuals, too, several, or all of those gifts, and that in their most abundant measure, were concentrated, as in the apostles: while in some others, they might have been, and doubtless were, so combined in their number, and proportioned in degree, as to render the transcendency of one man's gift a substitute for its entire want in some, and a supplement to its deficiency in others. Though, therefore, government might be the only public duty for

which the "rulers" and "governments" were thus fitted, it will not necessarily follow that all others were excluded. So that, whether they had associates in the performance of the functions of government—and if so, who those associates were, must be otherwise determined.

A passage apparently yet more decisive is found, 1 Tim. v. 17, *Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in word and doctrine.* "It is worthy of notice, that this passage fixes our attention upon ruling as the peculiar employment of the eldership; for all the elders rule. There is no comparison made in this verse between elders that rule, and elders that do not rule. But there is a comparison drawn between the ruling of some, and the ruling of others. As rulers, they are distinguished by different degrees of excellence. Some rule well. Others are defective in their ruling: they are neither so faithful nor so diligent as they ought to be: and the object of the Spirit of God, in the injunction here given, is to recommend to the special notice of the church those elders, that perform the duties of their office in an efficient manner, as persons that are entitled to receive double honour."

The view most frequently and strongly insisted upon in opposition to that thus given is,—that the apostle did not intend to distinguish between elders who were stately engaged in the public ministry, and other elders, who, though not so engaged, were associated with them in the general government of the churches; but between some who laboured less, and others who laboured more in both teaching and ruling. To this view it is replied: "Suppose this verse had contained nothing more than the injunction, expressed in the first clause of it, 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour'—and that the latter part of it had been wanting altogether—the remarks that I have made would have sufficed for the interpretation of it. It could not have been ascertained, from the first part of the verse, that there was any distinction between elders that merely rule, and elders who besides ruling, also teach. We *might have inferred* that there was such a distinction; but

we could not have affirmed that it was plainly taught. The statement, however, contained in the second part of the verse, places the matter beyond all reasonable doubt — ‘especially they who labour in word and doctrine.’ This addition to the verse would be altogether unmeaning, if there had been no ruling elders, distinct from those that laboured in word and doctrine. If all had laboured in word and doctrine, there would have been no necessity for the apostle adding these words. It would have been sufficient for him to have said, ‘Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour.’ On the supposition that they were all teaching elders, this statement would have been sufficiently explicit: there could have been no mistake as to his meaning. Why then should he add these words — “especially they who labour in word and doctrine,” — if there was no distinction among them? Was not such an addition as this calculated to mislead? Would not any person, reading these words, naturally conclude that there was a class of elders who, while they ruled, did not labour in word and doctrine, — seeing that they who laboured in word and doctrine were *especially* to receive double honour? According to the view I am combating, there was no speciality in the case. There were none *especially* entitled to receive double honour, on the ground of labouring in word and doctrine, seeing this was applicable to them all. Can we really attribute to the apostle such unmeaning language? What would we have said, if the verse had run in the following terms — ‘all the elders labour in word and doctrine. Let them that rule well be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in word and doctrine.’ Yet this is virtually the language, which the apostle is regarded as employing, by those who maintain that there are no ruling elders distinct from those that teach.

“The word *especially*, according to the common use of it, implies a distinction between one class and another. Should any one, for instance, in giving an account of a battle, say, ‘all the soldiers fought well: especially the infantry’—would we not understand him as intimating, that there were sol-

diers engaged in the battle who were not infantry? or should any one tell us, 'that all the students in the university distinguished themselves; especially the students in theology' — would we not understand by this declaration, that there were students in the university besides those who were studying theology? In like manner, when the apostle says, 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour; especially they who labour in word and doctrine' — are we not equally warranted in interpreting this language to mean, that there were elders who ruled well, besides those who laboured in word and doctrine?"*

In relation to the circumstance so strongly insisted upon by the acute and estimable Dr. Wardlaw, — that invariable usage requires that those to whom the term "especially" refers, in the latter part of the verse, should "be comprehended under the more general description in the former;" — it seems sufficient to reply, that they are so included. They are of "the elders who ruled well," but in addition to that ruling they "labour in the word and doctrine;" — just as in the statement, — "We trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, specially of those that believe," — the latter, to their nature as men, had added the character of Christian believers.

Another objection is thus stated and answered by Mr. King: — "It is said that honour in this passage means pay. Thus Dr. Guise, in his 'Practical Expositor,' explains 'double honour,' of 'the honour of maintenance.' Let the elders that rule well have liberal allowances, sufficient to make their worldly circumstances easy, reputable, and comfortable. That this is the sense of the words, he considers evident from what follows, verse 18: 'For the scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.' Thus understanding the word honour to mean support, he cannot think it would be demanded for all elders, though specially for teaching elders. Why should elders, who simply ruled well without teaching, have double,

* McKerrow.

er ample pay, at the church's cost, any more than the deacons, when the work of ruling occupied only their spare time, and 'left them at full liberty to pursue the business of their secular callings for their own and families' subsistence?' In reply, it must be admitted that the word translated 'honour,' does sometimes denote pay or wages, and that the allusions which follow, to the feeding of the ox and the rewarding of the labourer, seem to favour this interpretation. Some of the best expositors, however, independently of the question now agitated, think this a low and narrow explanation of the language. They understand the apostle to say, that the office bearers mentioned ought to be honoured in a way becoming them, as the ox and the labourer have their appropriate remuneration. But it must be carefully observed, that this question about the meaning of 'honour,' does not affect in the slightest degree the countenance which this passage apparently renders to the distinction of teaching and ruling elders. Grant that honour means pecuniary reward. The apostle, on this supposition, enjoins, that ample recompense be given to elders who spend a proportion of their time in ruling well, and especially to those elders who occupy themselves more entirely with the affairs of the church, by not only ruling well, but also labouring in word and doctrine. Where the office-bearers were poor men, as most of them are known to have been, there was nothing in this equitable compensation for lost time very unreasonable or improbable, and nothing, certainly, to obliterate that distinction between ruling and teaching elders which the language of the apostle clearly expresses. Surely the functions of elders are one thing, and the fittest mode of honouring them another."

Did the passage, thus examined, stand *alone*, it would seem sufficiently to establish the fact, — that an associated eldership, similar to that of the Jewish synagogue, was adopted in the churches of the New Testament. So the learned Dr. John Owen thought and wrote — decided congregationalist though he was. Referring to this passage, he states, — "This is a text of uncontrollable evidence, if it

had any thing 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 word and doctrine, and some who do not do so. 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 entrusted. All these, and only they, do rule in it."

In support of our interpretation, an honourable list of names might be adduced, embracing Reformers, Puritans, dignitaries and adherents of the Church of England, Presbyterians and Independents. And in support of the fact, — that the associated ruling and teaching eldership existed in the first ages of the Christian Church, and was long retained therein, might be adduced a list still more extended and illustrious. A few examples of each will close this topic.

Calvin, in his exposition of 1 Tim. v. 17, writes thus: — "From this passage we may gather that there were then two kinds of presbyters, because they were not all ordained to the work of teaching. For the words plainly mean that some ruled well, to whom no part of the public instruction was committed. And, verily, there were chosen from among the people grave and approved men, who, in common council and joint authority with the pastors, administered the discipline of the church, and acted the part of censors for the correcting of morals. This practice, Ambrose complains, had fallen into disuse through the indolence, or rather the pride, of the teaching elders, who wished alone to be distinguished.

"In his Institutions, (book iv. chapter iii.,) he has the following passage equally explicit. 'In calling those who *preside over churches* by the appellations of 'bishops,'

'elders,' and 'pastors,' without any distinction, I have followed the usage of the scriptures, which apply all these terms to express the same meaning. For to all who discharge the ministry of the word, they give the title of 'bishop.' So when Paul enjoins Titus to 'ordain elders in every city,' he immediately adds, 'For a bishop must be blameless.' So, in another place, he salutes more bishops than one in one church. And in the Acts of the Apostles, he is declared to have sent for the elders of the church of Ephesus, whom, in his address to them, he calls 'bishops.' Here it must be observed, that we have enumerated only those officers which consist in the ministry of the word; nor does Paul mention any other in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians which we have quoted. But in the Epistle to the Romans, and the first Epistle to the Corinthians, he enumerates others, as 'powers,' 'gifts of healing,' 'interpretation of tongues,' 'governments,' 'care of the poor.' Those functions which are temporary I omit, as foreign to our present subject. But there are two which perpetually remain; 'governments,' and 'the care of the poor.' 'Governors,' I apprehend to have been persons of advanced years, selected from the people, to unite with the bishops in giving admonitions, and exercising discipline. For no other interpretation can be given of that injunction, 'He that ruleth, let him do it with diligence.' For from the beginning every church has had its senate or council, composed of pious, grave, and holy men, who were invested with that jurisdiction, for the correction of vices, of which we shall soon treat. Now, that this was not the regulation of a single age, experience itself demonstrates. This office of government is necessary, therefore, in every age."

Zanchius, an Italian divine of the 16th century, justly distinguished among the Reformers on account of his piety and learning, thus gives his judgement. "The whole ministry of the christian church may be divided into three classes: the first consists of those who dispense the word and sacraments, corresponding with those who, under the Old Testament, were called priests and levites, and under the

New Testament, apostles, pastors, and teachers. The second consists of those whose peculiar office it is to take care of the discipline of the church, to inspect the lives and conversation of all, and to take care that all live in a manner becoming christians; and also, if at any time there should be a necessity for it, in the absence of the pastor, to instruct the people. There were such under the Old Testament in the synagogue; and such also were the senators who were added to the bishop in the administration of the New Testament church. These officers are styled presbyters, and elders, of which the apostle speaks, besides other places, in 1 Timothy, v. 17. 'Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.' In this passage the apostle manifestly speaks of two sorts or classes of elders, as he was understood by Ambrose and others, among the ancients, and by almost all our modern Protestant divines, as Bullinger, Peter Martyr, &c. &c.

"The most cursory reader of this extract will not fail to take notice, not only that Zanchius evidently approved of this office, but that he thought it of divine appointment; that he interpreted as we do the famous passage in Ambrose, which the opposers of ruling elders have expended so much ingenuity in labouring to explain away; and that he considered almost all the reformed divines as being of the same opinion with himself."

"The celebrated Estius, the learned Popish expositor and professor at Douay, in his commentary on 1 Timothy v. 17, delivers the following opinion:—'From this passage it may manifestly be gathered that in the time of the apostles there were certain presbyters in the church who ruled well, and were worthy of double honour, and who yet did not labour in the word and doctrine; neither do the heretics of the present day, (meaning the Protestants) deny this.'"

"Peter Martyr, a celebrated Protestant divine of Italy, whose high reputation induced Edward the sixth to invite him to England, where he was made Professor of Divinity

at Oxford, and Canon of Christ Church, speaks of ruling elders in the following decisive terms: — ‘The church, (speaking of the primitive church) had its elders, or, if I may so speak, its senate, who consulted about things which were for edification for the time being. Paul describes this kind of ministry, not only in the twelfth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, but also in the first Epistle to Timothy, where he thus writes: ‘Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those that labour in the word and doctrine.’ Which words appear to me to signify that there were then some elders who taught and preached the word of God, and another class of elders who did not teach, but only ruled in the church. Concerning these, Ambrose speaks when he expounds this passage in Timothy. Nay, he inquires whether it was owing to the pride or the sloth of the sacerdotal order that they had almost ceased in the church.”

Doddridge also, in his commentary on 1 Timothy, v. 17., in reference to the expression — *Especially they who labour in the word and doctrine*, observes, — “This seems to intimate that there were some who, though they presided in the church, were not employed in preaching. Limborch, indeed, is of opinion that *κοπιῶντες* signifies those who did even fatigue themselves with their extraordinary labours, which some might not do, who yet in the general presided well, supposing preaching to be a part of their work. But it seems much more natural to follow the former interpretation.”

In support of *the fact*, that such an association existed in the apostolic churches, and was long retained, the following, among other testimonies are adduced by Dr. Miller. “The first reformer whose testimony I shall adduce in favour of this office, is Ulrich Zuingli, the celebrated leader in the work of Reformation in Switzerland. And I mention him first, because as he never was connected with Calvin — nay, as he was removed by death in 1531, five years before Calvin ever saw Geneva, or appeared in the ranks of the reformers, and ten years before the introduction

of ruling elders into that city — he cannot be suspected of speaking as the humble imitator of that justly honoured individual. On the subject of ruling elders, Zuingle speaks thus: — ‘The title of Presbyter or elder, as used in scripture, is not rightly understood by those who consider it as applicable only to those who preside in preaching: for it is evident that the term is also sometimes used to designate elders of another kind, that is, senators, leaders, or counsellors. So we read Acts xv. where it is said, the apostles and elders came together to consider of this matter! Here we see that the elders spoken of are to be considered as senators or counsellors. It is evident that the *πρεσβυτεροι* mentioned in this place, were not ministers of the word; but that they were aged, prudent, and venerable men, who, in directing and managing the affairs of the church, were the same thing as the senators in our cities. And the title elder is used in the same sense in many other places in the Acts of the Apostles.’”

“The learned Francis Junius, a distinguished divine and professor of theology of the Church of Holland, who lived at the commencement of the Reformation in that country, and was, of course, contemporary with Martyr, Bucer, Melancthon, &c., wrote very fully and explicitly in favour of the office of ruling elder. In his work entitled *Ecclesiastici*, he decisively, and with great learning, maintains that pastors, ruling elders, and deacons, are the only three spiritual orders of church officers; that pastors, or ministers of the word and sacraments, are the highest order, and of course are invested with the power of ordaining; that the second class, are men of distinguished piety and prudence, chosen from among the members of the church, to assist the pastor in the government of the church; and that the deacons are appointed to collect and distribute the alms of the church. He affirms that these three orders are set forth in scripture, and existed in the primitive church: and that the disuse of ruling elders, as well as the introduction of prelacy, is a departure from the primitive model.

“*Few ministers of the Church of England, during the*

reign of Queen Elizabeth, were more distinguished for talents, learning and piety, than Thomas Cartwright, professor of divinity in the university of Cambridge, the opponent of the high prelatival claims of Archbishop Whitgift, and concerning whom the celebrated Beza pronounced, that he thought the sun did not shine upon a more learned man. This eminent divine, commenting upon Matthew, xviii. 17, 'Tell it unto, &c.,' thus remarks:— 'Theophylact upon this place interpreteth, Tell the church, that is many, because this assembly taketh knowledge of this and other things by their mouths; that is their governors. Chrysostom also saith that to tell the church is to tell the governors thereof. It is therefore to be understood that these governors of the church, which were set over every several assembly in the time of the law, were of two sorts; for some had the handling of the word; some other watching against the offences of the church, did, by common counsel with the ministers of the word, take order against the same. Those governing elders are divers times in the story of the gospel made mention of under the title of 'rulers of the synagogue.' And this manner of government, because it was to be translated into the church of Christ under the gospel, our Saviour, by the order at that time used among the Jews, declareth what after should be done in his church. Agreeably hereunto the apostle both declared the Lord's ordinance in his behalf, and put the same in practice, in ordaining to every several church, beside the ministry of the word, certain of the chiefest men which should assist the work of the Lord's building. This was also faithfully practised of the churches after the apostles' times, as long as they remained in any good and allowable soundness of doctrine. And being fallen from the churches, especially from certain of them, the want thereof is sharply and bitterly cast into the teeth of the church's teachers, — by whose ambition that came to pass.' And as a proof this, the author quotes in the margin that very passage of Ambrose cited in the preceding section, and which has always given so much trouble to Prelatists and Independents." — On this passage he thus expresses himself,

in his second reply to Whitgift. "For proof of these church elders, which, being occupied in the government, had nothing to do with the word, the testimony of Ambrose is so clear and open, that he which doth not give place unto it must needs be thought as a bat, or an owl, or some other night bird, to delight in darkness. His saying is, that the elders fell away by the ambition of the doctors; whereby opposing the elders to doctors which taught, he plainly declareth that they had not to do with the word: whereupon it is manifest that it was the use, in the best Reformed churches, certain hundred years after the times of the apostles, to have an eldership which meddled not with the word, nor administration of sacraments."

Whitgift, too, thus acknowledges the fact:—"I know that in the primitive church, they had in every church certain seniors, to whom the government of the congregation was committed; but that was before there was any Christian prince or magistrate that openly professed the gospel; and before there was any church by public authority established." And again:—"Both the name and office of seniors were extinguished before Ambrose's time, as he himself doth testify, writing upon the fifth of the first epistle to Timothy. Indeed, as Ambrose saith, the synagogue, and afterwards the church, had seniors, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; but that was before his time, and before there was any Christian magistrate, or any church established." "The learned and acute Archbishop, it seems, was not only convinced that there were ruling elders, distinct from preaching elders, in the primitive church, but with all his erudition and discernment, he understood Ambrose just as the friends of this class of officers now understand him."

"The testimony of the Rev. Dr. John Edwards, an eminently pious and learned divine of the Church of England, who flourished during the latter half of the seventeenth century, is equally decisive in favour of this office. His language is as follows:—

'This office of a ruling elder is according to the practice

of the church of God among the Jews, his own people. It is certain that there was this kind of elders under that economy. — There were two sorts of elders among the Jews, the ruling ones, who governed in their assemblies and synagogues, and the teaching ones, who read and expounded the scriptures. Accordingly, Dr. Lightfoot in his harmony of the New Testament, inclines to interpret 1 Timothy, v. 17, of the elders in the Christian congregations, who answer to the lay-elders in the Jewish synagogue. For this learned writer, who was well versed in the Jewish customs and practices, tells us, that in every synagogue among the Jews, there were elders that ruled chiefly in the affairs of the synagogue, and other elders that laboured in word and doctrine.’

“And so it was in the Christian church; there was a mixture of clergy and laity in their consults about church matters, as we see frequently in the Acts of the Apostles. The Christian church retained this usage, for which they quote St. Augustine’s one hundred and thirty-seventh Epistle, where he mentions the clergy, and the elders, and the people. So in his third book against Cresconius, he mentions deacons and seniors, that is lay-elders, for he distinguishes them from other presbyters. One of his epistles to his church in Hippo is thus superscribed, — ‘To the Clergy and the Elders.’ See chapter fifty-sixth in the fore-named book against Cresconius, where he mentions Peregrius the presbyter, and the elders (seniors.) And nothing can be plainer than that of St. Ambrose — ‘Both the synagogue and afterwards, the church had their elders, without whose counsels nothing was done in the church, &c.’ Further, we read of these seniors in the writings of Optatus p. 41, and in the epistles annexed to him, which the reader may consult. Thus it appears that this was an ancient office in the church, and not invented by Calvin, as some have thought and writ. And then as to the reason of the thing, there should be no ground of quarrelling with this office in the church seeing it is useful. It was instituted for the ease of the preaching elders, that they might not be

overburdened with business, and that they might more conveniently apply themselves to that employment which is purely ecclesiastical and spiritual. Truly if there was no such office mentioned in the scripture, we might reasonably wish for such a one, it being so useful and serviceable to the great purposes of religion. What can be more desirable than that there should be one or more appointed to observe the conversation of the flock in order to the exercising of discipline? The pastor himself cannot be supposed to have an eye on every one of his charge; and, therefore, it is fitting that out of those who are fellow-members, and daily converse with one another, and therefore are capable of acquainting themselves with their manners and behaviour, there should be chosen these elders I am speaking of, to inspect the carriage and deportment of the flock."

"The celebrated Dr. Thomas Goodwin, one of the Westminster Assembly of Divines, and who is styled by Antony A. Wood, a very 'atlas and patriarch of Independency,' is well known to have been one of the most learned and influential Independents of the seventeenth century, and one of the most voluminous and instructive writers of his class. In his *Church Order Explained*, in a way of catechism, the following passage occurs;— What sort of bishops hath God set in his church? Answer. Two; some pastors and teachers; some ruling elders, under two heads; some labour in word and doctrine, and of those, some are pastors, some teachers, others rule only, and labour not in the word and doctrine.' Again; 'What is the office and work of the ruling elder? Answer. Seeing the kingdom of God is not of this world, but heavenly and spiritual, and the government of his kingdom is not lordly, but stewardly and ministerial; and to labour in the ministry of exhortation and doctrine is the proper work of the pastors and teachers; it remaineth, therefore, to be the office and work of the ruling elders to assist the pastors and teachers in diligent attendance to all other aids of rule besides exhortation and doctrine, as becometh good stewards of the household of God. As, first, *to open and shut the doors of God's house, by admission of*

members, by ordination of officers, by excommunication of notorious and obstinate offenders. Secondly; to see that none live in the church inordinately, without a calling, or idle in their calling. Thirdly; to prevent and heal offences whether in life or doctrine that might corrupt their own church, or other churches. Fourthly; to prepare matters for the church's consideration, and to moderate the carriage of all matters in the church assemblies. Finally, to feed the flock of God by a word of admonition, and as they shall be called, to visit and pray with their sick brethren. The ground of all this is laid down in Romans xii. 8, where the apostle, besides him who exhorteth and teacheth, maketh mention of another officer, who ruleth with diligence, and is distinct from the pastors and teachers, and that is the sum of his work, to rule with diligence. Thus you see the whole duty of these ruling elders, and how they are to assist the pastors and teachers in all other acts of rule besides word and doctrine."—And his justly celebrated coadjutors, — Bridge, Burroughs, and Nye, admit, that "the scripture says much of two sorts of elders, teaching and ruling; and in some places so plain, as if of purpose to distinguish them."

The following remarks of the Rev. Cotton Mather, well known as an eminent Congregationalist, of Massachusetts, and author of the *Magnalia Christi Americana*, have too much point, and convey too much instruction, to be omitted in this list of testimonies: "There are some who cannot see any such officer as what we call a ruling elder, directed and appointed in the word of God; and partly through a prejudice against the office; and partly, indeed chiefly, through a penury of men well qualified for the discharge of it, as it has been heretofore understood and applied, our churches are now generally destitute of such helps in government. But unless a church have divers elders, the church government must needs become either prelati- c or popular. And that a church is needing but one elder, is an opinion, contrary not only to the sense of the faithful in all ages, but also to the law of the scriptures, where there can

be nothing plainer than elders who rule well, and are worthy of double honour, though they do not labour in word and doctrine: whereas, if there were any teaching elders, who do not labour in word and doctrine, they would be so far from worthy of double honour, that they would not be worthy of any honour at all. Towards the adjusting of the difference which has been thus in the judgements of judicious men some essays have been made, and one particularly in such terms as these. 'Let it be first recognized, that all the other church officers are the assistants of the pastor, who was himself entrusted with the whole care of all, until the further pity and kindness of our Lord Jesus Christ joined other officers unto him for his assistance in it. I suppose none will be so absurd as to deny this at least, that all church officers are to take the advice of the pastor with them.' Upon which I subjoin, that a man may be a distinct officer from his pastor, and yet not have a distinct office from him. The pastor may be the ruling elder, and yet he may have elders to assist him in ruling, and in the actual discharge of some things which they are able and proper to be serviceable to him in. This consideration being laid, I will persuade myself every pastor among us will allow me, that there is much work to be done for God in preparing of what belongs to the admission and exclusion of church members; in carefully inspecting the way and walk of them all, and the first appearance of evil with them; in preventing the very beginnings of ill-blood among them, and instructing of all from house to house, more privately, and warning of all persons into the things more peculiarly incumbent on them: in visiting all the afflicted, and informing of, and consulting with the ministers, for the welfare of the whole flock. And they must allow me, that this work is too heavy for any one man; and that more than one man, yea all our churches, do suffer beyond measure because no more of this work is thoroughly performed. Moreover, they will acknowledge to me, that it is an usual thing with a prudent and faithful pastor himself to single out *some of the more grave, solid, aged brethren in his congre-*

gation to assist him in many parts of this work, on many occasions in a year; nor will such a pastor, ordinarily, do any important thing in his government without having first heard the counsels of such brethren. In short, there are few discreet pastors but what make many occasional ruling elders every year."

Giesler observes — "The duty of teaching, as an office, was by no means incumbent on the elders, although the apostle wishes that they should be *apt to teach*. 1 Tim. iii. 2; 2 Tim. ii. 24. The capacity for instructing and edifying in the assemblies was rather considered as a free gift of the Spirit, which manifested itself in many Christians, although in different modes. 1 Cor. xii. 28-31. xiv. Still less was a distinct priestly order known at this time; for the whole society of Christians formed a royal priesthood. 1 Pet. ii. 9. God's peculiar people. 1 Peter, v. 3."

Such also is the view given by Neander in the following passage: —

"But when, in the Epistle to Titus, it is demanded in a bishop, that he not only 'hold fast the form of sound words,' in his private capacity, but that he should be able to strengthen others therein; to overcome opposers, and 'convince gainsayers,' it seems to be implied that he should possess the 'gift of teaching.' This must have been, in many situations of the churches, exposed as they were to errors of every kind, highly desirable. And on this account, in 1 Tim. v. 17, those among the elders, who united the gift of teaching with that of governing, were to be especially honoured. This distinction of the two gifts shows that they were not constantly or necessarily united."

Could we proceed no further, it would seem to be abundantly evident that in the apostolic churches none of the functions of government, except some branches of the executive, were vested exclusively in the teaching ministry; but that others, who would now be denominated laymen, were associated with them in the management of all the affairs of their respective communities. We are not however confined within such limits; as facts and statements

given in the New Testament sufficiently evince that, whatever may have been the constitution of the governing eldership, or whatever its functions, the *churches themselves* had a voice in the election of their officers, in conjunction with their elders; and were also considered as entitled both to judge respecting the scripturalness of the doctrines taught, the worship established, and the discipline enforced; and to act according to that judgement, in the spirit of christian meekness, and with due regard to the peace and purity of the churches. They were taught that obedience to their rulers was not to supplant the higher duty of allegiance to Christ;—that submission on their part to doctrinal or practical corruptions, was incompatible with their obligations to him;—that, as the subjects of his kingdom, they were invested with rights, and were the subjects of corresponding responsibilities;—that they were entitled to require the administration of government according to his laws, and were bound to obedience only within those limits;—and that, so far from having only to learn what their pastors might be disposed to teach, and passively to acquiesce in what their rulers might do or command, they were themselves to *prove all things*, and to hold fast that only, which, in their judgement, harmonized with the mind of Christ; and to obey only in conformity to his law.

“The only view in which the sacred writers of the New Testament appear to have contemplated the churches, was that of associations founded upon the conviction of the truth of Christianity and the obligatory nature of the commands of Christ. They considered the pastors as dependent for their support upon the free contributions of the people; and the people as bound to sustain, love and obey them in all things lawful, that is in all things agreeable to the doctrine they had received in the scriptures, and, in things indifferent, to pay respectful deference to them. They enjoined it upon the pastors to ‘rule well,’ ‘diligently,’ and with fidelity, in executing the directions they had given them;—to silence all teachers of false *doctrines*, and their adherents;—to reprove unruly and

immoral members of the church, and if incorrigible, to put them away. On the other hand, should any of their pastors or teachers err in doctrine, the people are enjoined not 'to receive them,' to 'turn away' from them, and not even to bid them 'God-speed.' The rule which forbids Christians 'to eat,' that is, to communicate at the Lord's table with an immoral 'brother,' held, of course, good, when that brother was a pastor. Thus pastors were put by them under the influence of the public opinion of the churches; and the remedy of separating from them, in manifest defections of doctrine and morals, was afforded to the sound members of a church, should no power exist able or inclined to silence the offending pastor and his party."

"With respect to the members of a church, the same remark is applicable as to the members of a state. It is not matter of option with them whether they will be under government according to the laws of Christ or not, for that is imperative; government in both cases being of Divine appointment. They have, on the other hand, the right to full security, that they shall be governed by the laws of Christ; and they have a right too to establish as many guards against human infirmity and passion in those who are 'set over them,' as may be prudently devised, provided these are not carried to such an extent as to be obstructive to the legitimate scriptural discharge of their duties. The true view of the case appears to be, that the government of the church is in its pastors, open to various modifications as to form; and that it is to be conducted with such a concurrence of the people, as shall constitute a sufficient guard against abuse, and yet not prevent the legitimate and efficient exercise of pastoral duties, as these duties are stated in the scriptures."*

"In the apostolical church, there was one office which bears no resemblance to any other, and to which none can be made to conform. This is the office of the Apostles.

* R. Watson.

They stand as the medium of communication between Christ and the whole Christian church, to transmit his word and his spirit through all ages. In this respect, the church must ever continue to acknowledge her dependence upon them and to own their rightful authority. Their authority and power can be delegated to none other. But the service which the Apostles themselves sought to confer, was to transmit to men the word and the Spirit of the Lord, and by this means, to establish independent Christian communities. These communities when once established, they refused to hold in a state of slavish dependence upon themselves. Their object was, in the spirit of the Lord, to make the churches free, and independent of their guidance. To the churches their language was, 'Ye beloved, ye are made free, be ye the servants to no man.' The churches were taught to govern themselves. All the members were made to co-operate together as organs of one spirit, in connection with which spiritual gifts were imparted to each as he might need. Thus they, whose prerogative it was to rule among the brethren, demeaned themselves as the servants of Christ and his Church. They acted in the name of Christ and his Church, as the organs of that Spirit with which all were inspired, and from which they derived the consciousness of their mutual Christian fellowship.

"The brethren chose their own officers from among themselves. Or if, in the first organization of the churches, their officers were appointed by the Apostles, it was with the approbation of the members of the same. The general concerns of the church were managed by the Apostles in connection with their brethren in the church, to whom they also addressed their epistles."†

These representations are fully sustained by that most authentic, as well as most authoritative record, the New Testament.

In the election of church officers, the great body of the

† Neander.

people had a direct voice and influence. Milner has indeed stated, that the Apostles ordained successors, "without any consultation of the respective flocks over which they were about to preside;" yet adds,—“ But as it was neither reasonable nor probable that any set of persons after them should be regarded as their equals, this method of appointing ecclesiastical rulers did not continue, and undoubtedly the election of bishops devolved on the people. Their appearance to vote on these occasions; their constraining of persons sometimes to accept of office against their will; and the determination of Pope Leo, long after, against forcing a bishop on a people against their consent, demonstrates this :—“ So far, however, were the Apostles from acting alone, without the concurrence of the churches, in making official appointments, as Milner thus represents, that that concurrence was both sought and given, in an appointment to *the apostleship itself*; though had it consisted with their views of church order, that *any* appointment to office should be made without the co-operation of the church, it was surely this. The office was instituted by Christ himself;—to be able, *as an eye witness*, to testify of him, was *essential* to it; and, therefore, with the then existing generation its functions must cease: the possession of miraculous gifts, and the infallible teachings of the Holy Spirit, were among its honourable distinctions; and not a church alone, or a city, or a nation, but *the world* was the sphere of its duties. Had the vacancy created among a class of men so far removed from all others in office and endowments, been filled up by themselves,—had they, in the entire transaction, stood aloof from all others,—assembled in secret conclave,—made the appointment, and then authoritatively announced it to the churches,—not even the most strenuous advocate of popular rights would have felt surprise, nor would the abettor of absolute power have deemed an argument valid, drawn from so unprecedented a fact, in order to prove the exclusive right of Christian *teachers* to appoint to all offices in the church. But when such men,

in appointing even to the *apostleship*, connect themselves with the whole number of the disciples,—call on them to select two fit candidates for the office,—and then proceed to determine, by lot, on which of the two, so presented, the office shall be conferred; a course is pursued, having apparently for its principal, if not its only object, the recognition of the right of the churches to a voice and influence in all matters pertaining to their welfare. That such was the course actually adopted, the history of the transaction clearly evinces :—

And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples, and said, (the number of the names together were about an hundred and twenty,) Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before concerning Judas, which was guide to them that took Jesus. For he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of this ministry. Of these men which have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection. And they appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed, and said, Thou, Lord, which knowest the hearts of all men, shew whether of these two thou hast chosen, that he may take part of this ministry and apostleship, from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place. And they gave forth their lots: and the lot fell upon Matthias; and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.—Acts i. 15-17, 21-26.

On this narrative it is well observed by Barnes :—

“ 1. This was an election to a *vacancy*, not to a succession in the office. The reason which Peter gives for the election at all is, that it was proper because a *vacancy* had occurred by the death of Judas, not because it was necessary to keep up the ‘*succession*.’ One had been removed who had been chosen to fill a specific place, and to accomplish a particular object, and it was important that his *place* should be filled.

“2. It was an election by the church, and not particularly by the Apostles. Indeed, it is only from the probability that the Apostles would be present on such an occasion, that there is any reason to believe that they were there, for they are not mentioned. The address of Peter was made to the ‘disciples’ who are said to have ‘been about an hundred and twenty,’ Acts i. 15; and it is manifest, from the narrative, that the votes in the case were given by them. No intimation is furnished that any others voted than those before whom the proposition of Peter was made; and it is morally certain, that if the vote had been given by the apostles, such a fact would have been stated. This account shows that the apostles did not mean of *themselves* to appoint successors; but so far as it goes, it shows that the selection was made by the body of the communicants in the church.

“3. In the whole speech of Peter, he never breathes a note of either himself or his fellow-apostles conferring apostolic power on Matthias, or on any one else. He submitted the nomination in the most anti-episcopal manner to the whole of the disciples, and then referred the final decision to the Lord. *They* appointed two, Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. The fair obvious construction of this is, that it was done, by the ‘hundred and twenty disciples,’ to whom Peter had submitted the proposition respecting the necessity of electing one to fill the vacancy.”

“Chrysostom’s exposition of the passage, confirmed as it is also by Cyprian, may, without doubt, be received as a fair expression of the sentiments and usages of the early church on this subject. ‘Peter did every thing 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.’ After quoting the words, ‘they appointed two,’ he adds, he did not himself appoint them, it was the act of all.’

“The order of the transaction appears to be as follows :

Peter stands up in the midst of the disciples, convened in assembly to the number of one hundred and twenty, and explains to them the necessity of their proceeding to the choice of another apostle in the place of the apostate Judas, and urges them to proceed to the election of such. The whole assembly then designate two of their number as candidates for the office, and after prayer for divine direction, all cast lots, and the lot falls upon Matthias ; or, according to Mosheim, all cast their votes, and the vote falls upon Matthias. Whatever may have been the *mode* of election, it appears to have been a popular vote, and indicates the inherent right of the people to make the election."

A course precisely similar was pursued in the appointment of deacons. The distribution of the alms of the church having been in the hands of the apostles, or more probably, as observed by Mosheim, in the hands of some of the Palestinian Jewish converts, under their direction ; the rapidly increasing number of the disciples soon rendered a different arrangement necessary. *When the number of the disciples was multiplied, there arose a murmuring of the Grecians against the Hebrews, because their widows were neglected in the daily ministrations. Then the twelve called the multitude of the disciples unto them, and said, It is not reason that we should leave the word of God, and serve tables. Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the Holy Ghost, and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business. But we will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word. And the saying pleased the whole multitude : and they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Ghost, and Philip, and Prochorus, and Nicanor, and Timon, and Parmenas, and Nicholas, a proselyte of Antioch : whom they set before the apostles : and when they had prayed, they laid their hands on them.*

Here, as in the former case, apostolic functions were exercised in declaring the mind of Christ ; which was — that seven men possessing specified qualifications should be ap-

pointed, whose special province it should be to take charge of, and distribute the funds of the church. But, though they thus, in their apostolic character, announced the law, they did not claim to supercede the church by being the sole executors of it : though had they proceeded at once to nominate and appoint, — and had they prevented or repressed the imputation of ambition, by an appeal to their disinterestedness and integrity — the relation in which they stood to the church, as its spiritual fathers — and the unrivalled supernatural qualifications with which, as apostles, they were endowed, — no wonder would have been excited in any mind, nor would any one have supposed that the procedure had furnished any just ground of complaint. But with the exercise of apostolic functions, they connected the recognition of the rights of the church ; and, while specifying the number of persons to be appointed, and the qualifications necessary to be possessed by them, they not only allowed, but *directed*, the *multitude of the disciples* to select the men in whom, according to their judgement, those qualifications met, that they might be duly appointed to the work of the deaconate. Thus, in the *infancy* of the Christian church — when that infantile state might have been pleaded in justification of an *opposite* course — and when *apostles* stood, as fathers, at its head ; — men, who were felt and acknowledged to be under the especial guidance of the Spirit of inspiration, and the splendour of whose miracles was convincing the candid, confounding the gainsayers, and causing believers to exult ; — even at that time, and by those men, the right of the church to a voice in the election of its officers was distinctly recognized ; and thus that right, so far as *apostolic* precedent and the practice of the first Christian church can do it, is fully established. It may be necessary to add, that the Hebrew Christians were no strangers to the exercise of such a right ; as not only is it inherent in every voluntary society, but it had been exercised by their ancestors from the earliest period of their national existence, and continued to be freely exercised when the Christian church was established. Moses, who, under Jehovah, stood in the same relation to

the Jewish commonwealth as that in which the apostles stood, under Christ, to the Christian church, thus recognized and established the right, in the first appointment of rulers over the people. — *I spake unto you at that time, saying . . . Take you wise men, and understanding, and known among your tribes, and I will make them rulers over you. And ye answered me and said, The thing which thou hast spoken is good for us to do. So I took the chief of your tribes, wise men, and known, and made them heads over you,*” &c. Deut. i. 13-15. Josephus, in his life written by himself, affirms that “all public affairs were transacted in the synagogue, the people having been consulted;” and that “the very legate of the Sanhedrim consulted with the people of Tiberius, as to removing him from his office.”

Vitringa has shown that “the synagogue was, essentially a popular assembly, invested with the rights and possessing the powers which are essential to the enjoyment of religious liberty. Their government was voluntary, elective, free; and administered by rulers or elders elected by the people. The ruler of the synagogue was the moderator of the college of elders, but only *primus inter pares*, holding no official rank above them. The people appointed their own officers to rule over them. They exercised the natural right of free men to enact and execute their own laws, to admit proselytes, and to exclude, at pleasure, unworthy members from their communion. Theirs was ‘a democratical form of government,’ and is so described by one of the most able expounders of the constitution of the primitive churches.”

“But although the government of the Jews was a theocracy, it was not destitute of the usual forms which exist in civil governments among men. God, it is true, was the king; and the high-priest, if we may be allowed so to speak, was his minister of state; but still the political affairs were in a great measure under the disposal of the elders, princes, &c. It was to them that Moses gave the divine commands, determined expressly their powers, and submitted their requests to the decision of God. Numbers xiv. 5; xvi. 4, et seq.; xxvii. 5, 6. It was in reference to the great power

possessed by these men, who formed the legislative assembly of the nation, that Josephus pronounced the government *aristocratical*. But from the circumstance that the people possessed so much influence as to render it necessary to submit laws to them for their ratification, and that they even took it upon themselves sometimes to propose laws or to resist those which were enacted; from the circumstance, also, that the legislature of the nation had not the power of levying taxes, and that the civil code was regulated and enforced by God himself, independently of the legislature, *Lowman* and *John David Michaelis* are in favour of considering the Hebrew government a *democracy*. In support of their opinion, such passages are examined as the following: Exod. xix. 7, 8; xxiv. 3-8; comp. Deu. xxix. 9-14; Josh. ix. 18, 19; xxiii. 1 et seq.; xxiv. 2, et seq.; 1 Sam. x. 24; xi. 14, 15; Numbers, xxvii. 1-8; xxxvi. 1-9. The truth seems to lie between these two opinions. The Hebrew government, putting out of view its theocratical features, was of a mixed form, in some respects approaching to a democracy, in others assuming more of an aristocratical character."*

Trained up under a system thus popular in its character, and which bore the impress of divinity, — and imbued with its liberal spirit, the apostles were *prepared* to recognize, without either discussion or formal enactment, the right of the church to a voice in every appointment to office, whether it related to the performance of the highest spiritual functions, or only to the more humble, yet necessary duties of the deaconate; while that right, the people, for the same reason, were equally prepared to exercise. On the one side, no necessity existed either for enactment or explanation; and on the other, no room was left to put in any claim. This serves sufficiently to account for a fact by which some have been perplexed, and which others have employed for the subversion of the liberties of the church; — that both in the accounts of the appointment of elders in the several churches, which are given in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the directions addressed to Timothy and Titus, no reference

* *Jahn*.

is made to the churches as either nominating those elders, or as actively concurring, by vote, or otherwise, in their appointment ; but, contrariwise, qualifications are described, and apostles or evangelists are represented as appointing, without either counsel or control. And had the right to a voice in the appointment of its officers been represented as originating in the Christian church, — or, although existing elsewhere, had *no account* been given of its exercise there,—the omission, in the cases to which reference has been made, might have seemed to prove the non-existence of the right. But happily for the cause of the church's freedom, both reason and fact are in direct opposition to all this. If a right to a voice in the election of its officers, is inherent in every voluntary association, it must be more especially so in an association which involves the interests of the soul and eternity. If in such matters as the respective professions and occupations of social life, freedom to determine to whom he will intrust his health, his instruction in any branch of knowledge, or the management of his business or property is, indeed, the natural right of every man, of which he cannot be forcibly deprived without gross injustice, — much more indefeasible and important must be his right to a voice in the election of the teachers of that truth, and the administrators of that discipline, which deeply affect his present advancement in holiness and spiritual joy, and involve the ineffable realities of eternity. And if, in the former case, the denial of the right is injustice, in the latter it must be outrage and rapine. Of a right thus sacred, the Jews, whose divinely appointed institutions had ever fostered in them the love of freedom, had in all periods of their history been tenacious ; and, as has been shown, in the synagogue especially, out of which the first converts were gathered in almost all countries, and after the general model of which the first churches were formed, it was most freely exercised. Its transfer, therefore, to churches formed after such a model, and both *by* and *of* men habituated to the free exercise of the right, must have been so accordant with all their modes of thinking, and *with all their* convictions of rectitude, that nothing less

than the clearest positive evidence of its non-existence in the churches would suffice to prove that the transfer was not made. But whatever there is of positive proof, establishes the fact, that that transfer *was* made, while a negation only can be pleaded in opposition. But if positive evidence is to be *thus* neutralized, it will be easy to destroy the credibility of some of the most important facts recorded in the sacred volume, and to subvert every doctrine of the cross. — Did the New Testament, therefore, contain no other proof than that already adduced, and were no collateral evidence found, either there or in the early history of the churches, — the clearly established facts, that in the Jewish synagogues the people had a voice in the election of the officers, and that, even in the infancy of the Christian church, and when under the guidance of inspired teachers, the right was directed by them to be exercised in the *first* official appointments made, and *the only ones* in that church of which any account is furnished; — and when, too, those appointments embraced the highest spiritual functionary, and the distributor of alms; the inference would seem to be inevitable, — that the liberty of the Jewish synagogue was, in this respect at least, transferred to the Christian churches; and that the right of the people to a voice in *every* official appointment there, was recognized and established. And to this, another inference may be added; — that, inasmuch as such facts rendered some counterstatement necessary, had no such custom been established, the *absence* of every such statement, either in the instances relied upon to disprove the right, or elsewhere, only strengthens the conclusion, and sustains the truth which those cases are brought forward to subvert.

But the evidence already adduced does not stand alone. Acts xiv. 23, we read, — ‘*And when they [Paul and Barnabas] had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.*’ On this statement Colman remarks, “If according to the marginal reading, we understand, with our interpreters, the declaration to be, that the apostles made choice of

these disciples, even this supposition does not, necessarily, exclude the members of the church themselves from participation in the election. It would imply rather, that they proceeded in the usual way, by calling the attention of the churches to the election of their own presbyters; just as in the instructions which Paul gives to Titus and to Timothy, respecting the appointment of presbyters, and deacons for the churches of Ephesus and Crete respectively, the participation of these churches in the appointment is of necessity pre-supposed. 'For, from the fact that Paul, in committing to his pupils, as to Timothy and Titus, the organization of new churches, or of those which had fallen into many distractions, committed to them also the appointment of the presbyters and deacons, and directed their attention to the qualifications requisite for such offices, — from this fact, we are by no means to infer, that they themselves effected this alone, without the participation of the churches. Much more, indeed, does the manner in which Paul himself is elsewhere wont to address himself to the whole church, and to claim the co-operation of the whole, authorize us to expect, that at least where there existed a church already established, he would have required their co-operation also in matters of common concern. But the supposition is certainly possible, that the apostle, in many cases, and especially in forming a new church, might think it best himself to propose to the church the persons best qualified for its officers, and such a nomination must naturally have had great weight. In the example of the family of Stephanus at Corinth, we see the members of the household first converted in the city, becoming, also, the first to fill the offices of the church.'* Neander also asserts, that this mode of election, by the whole body of the church, remained unimpaired in the third century.

“ But the phrase itself, *χειροτονουαρις*, may, with great probability, be understood to indicate that the appointment of these presbyters was by a public vote of the church.

* Neander.

“ 1. *This is the appropriate meaning of the term, χειροτονίη, which is here used.* It means to stretch out the hand, to hold up the hand, as in voting; hence to vote; to give one's vote, by holding up the hand. So it is rendered by Robinson, who, in the passage before us, translates it, *to choose by vote, to appoint.* Suidas also renders it by ἐκλεξάμενοι, *having chosen.* Such is the concurring authority of lexicographers.

“ 2. *This rendering is sustained by the common use of the term by early Christian writers.* The brother who accompanied Paul in his agency to make charitable collections for the suffering Jews in Judea, was chosen of the churches for this service, where the same word is used, χειροτονηθείς. ‘It will become you,’ says Ignatius to the church at Philadelphia, ‘as the church of God, to ordain, χειροτονησαι, to choose some deacon to go there,’ i.e. to the church at Antioch.

“ Again to the church at Smyrna, ‘It will be fitting, and for the honour of God, that your church appoint, χειροτονησαι, elect some worthy delegate,’ &c.

“ The council of Neocæsarea directs that a presbyter should not be *chosen*, μη χειροτονήσθω, before he is thirty years old. The council of Antioch forbids a bishop to be chosen, χειροτονήσθω, without the presence of the synod, and of the metropolitan; and the apostolical canons direct that a bishop must be chosen, χειροτονήσθω, by two or three bishops. Again, in the Greek version of the Codex Ecclesiæ Africanæ, the heading of the nineteenth canon is, that a bishop should not be chosen, χειροτονήσθαι, except by the multitude ἀπὸ πολλῶν.

“ The above examples all relate, neither to an official appointment or commission granted by another, nor to an ordination consecration, but to an actual election by a plurality of voters.

“ According to Suicer, the primary and appropriate signification of the term is, *to denote an election made by the uplifting of the hand*, and particularly denotes the election of a bishop by vote. ‘In this sense,’ he adds, ‘it

continued for a long time to be used in the church, denoting not an ordination or consecration, but an election.' Grotius, Meyer, and De Wette so interpret the passage, to say nothing of Beza, Bohmer, Rothe, and others.

"To the same effect is also the following extract from Tindal:—'We read only of the apostles constituting elders *by the suffrages of the people*, Acts xiv. 23, which, as it is the genuine signification of the Greek word, *χρηροταυησαντες*, so it is accordingly interpreted by Erasmus, Beza, Diodati, and those who translated the Swiss, French, Italian, Belgic, and even English Bibles, till the episcopal correction, which leaves out the words, *by election*, as well as the marginal notes, which affirm, that the apostles did not thrust pastors into the church through a lordly superiority, but *chose and placed them there by the voice of the congregation*. Tyndale's translation is as follows:—'And when they had ordered them seniors, by election, in every congregation, after they had preyde and fasted, they commended them to God, on whom they beleved.' In view of the whole, must we not conclude, that presbyters, like all other ecclesiastical officers, were elected in the apostolical churches by the suffrages of the people. And is not all this sufficient to justify the rendering above given, though the term be used to denote also either an official appointment, or the laying on of hands?

"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 authorized to collect and organize 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*."*

* Davidson.

In support of this conclusion, we have the testimony of Clement of Rome, who was contemporary with some of the apostles, and whose epistle to the Corinthians was written, according to Bishop Wake, about the year 60 or 70 ; or, as supposed by Geisler and others, towards the end of the first century. In this epistle, which has deservedly occupied the highest place in all ages of the church, among the uninspired productions of its earliest writers, Clement states :—“ Our apostles knew by our Lord Jesus Christ that there should contentions arise upon the account of the ministry. And, therefore, having a perfect foreknowledge of this, they appointed persons” (bishops, or elders and deacons) “ as we have before said, and then gave direction, how, when they should die, other chosen and approved men should succeed in their ministry. Wherefore, we do not think that those who are constituted by them,” (the apostles,) “ or afterwards by other eminent men, *with the consent of the whole church*, and who, with humility of mind, have ministered to the flock of Christ blamelessly, quietly, and disinterestedly ; and who were for a long time commended by all, may justly be thrown out of the ministry.” Clement here obviously affirms not only that the apostles appointed church officers, and gave directions how, after their death, they were to be appointed by others ; but also that, in both cases, the appointment was made *with the approbation of the church*. This testimony is also abundantly supported by the fact attested by Neander, and of which, evidence will be adduced hereafter, —“ that this mode of election, by the whole body of the church, remained unimpaired in the third century.”

Were additional proof necessary, that the right contended for existed in the apostolic churches, and that it extended, as it naturally must, to the collateral acts of rejection and removal, it would be found,—First, in the tests of trial furnished, not to the officers, but to the churches themselves.—*By their fruits ye shall know them. Every Spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God.*—Second, in the injunctions,—

*Beware of false prophets:—Prove all things:—Try the Spirits whether they be of God:—If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; For he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds:—Mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them:—Though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed:—*Third, In the fact that in the epistles to the Asiatic churches, the Ephesian church is praised because *it could not bear them which were evil, but it had tried them which said they were apostles, and were not, and had found them liars;—*while that of Thyatira is threatened, because *it had in it, (either as officers, or members, or both), those who held the doctrine of Balaam and of the Nicolaitans;—*and the church at Thyatira is censured, because it suffered a professed prophetess to teach doctrines whereby its faith and practice were corrupted.—That the right thus supposed to exist in the churches, was exercised by them, we learn from the epistle of Clement, already cited. Having stated that the pastors whom the Corinthian church had approved, and who continued to labour faithfully and blamelessly could not “justly be thrown out of the ministry,” he adds,—“But we see how you have put out some, who lived reputably among you, from the ministry, which by their innocence they had adorned.”—“Tis a shame, my beloved, yea a very great shame, and unworthy of your Christian profession, to hear that the most firm and ancient church of the Corinthians should, by one or two persons, be led into a sedition against its elders.”—“Let us, therefore, as many as have transgressed by any of the suggestions of the adversary, beg God’s forgiveness. And as for those who have been the heads of the sedition and faction among you, let them look to the common end of your hope.” It is surely abundantly clear, that the evil here complained of, by Clement, was not the *presumptuous assumption of a right, but its unjust exercise.* The sin of the members of

the Corinthian church was not, that, arrogating to themselves a power which belonged exclusively to others, they had "thrown out" *any* "of the ministry;" but only that, influenced by the spirit of faction, and "led by one or two persons," they had cast off elders "*who were for a long time commended by all,*" and who had continued to minister "with humility of mind"—"*blamelessly, quietly, and disinterestedly.*" While, therefore, "sedition and faction" are righteously condemned, the right of the churches to judge of the teaching and lives of their pastors, and to reject the unworthy, is confirmed.

That the liberty thus hallowed by apostolic authority, and freely exercised in the first Christian churches in the appointment and removal of their highest officers, would be equally recognized in every subordinate department, is only what all would naturally expect. And facts prove that it was so. Throughout the Acts of the Apostles its exercise is clearly traced. In the determination of litigated questions—in the setting apart of individuals to particular works—and in sending them to particular spheres of labour,—no assertion of *exclusive ministerial prerogative* is heard; no manifestation of it is seen: but if, in consequence of the brevity of the history, no mention is made of *the church* when Peter and John are sent to Samaria, for the same reason, no mention is made either of *apostles* or *elders* when Barnabas is sent to Antioch. When the fruit of the gratitude of the gentile churches was to be reaped and sent to the saints at Judea, where, according to the prediction of Agabus, famine prevailed, a direction was given, which as beautifully illustrates, as it clearly proves, how fully the apostles identified the churches with themselves, and how little of the distance and assumed dignity of office characterized them. St. Paul wrote to the Corinthians:—

Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him, that there be no gatherings when I come. And when I come, whomsoever ye shall up-

prove by your letters, them will I send to bring your liberality unto Jerusalem. And if it be meet that I go also, they shall go with me.—1 Cor. xvi. 1-4. *Thanks be to God, which put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. For indeed he accepted the exhortation; but being more forward, of his own accord he went unto you. And we have sent with him the brother, whose praise is in the gospel throughout all the churches; And not that only, but who was also chosen of the churches to travel with us with this grace, which is administered by us to the glory of the same Lord, and declaration of your ready mind: Avoiding this, that no man should blame us in this abundance which is administered by us: Providing for honest things, not only in the sight of the Lord, but also in the sight of men.*—2 Cor. viii. 16-21.

Here, the churches are not *permitted* merely, but *directed* to appoint whom they please either to go alone to Jerusalem, or to be associated with the apostle in the conveyance and distribution of their bounty. And were it even true,—though it has never yet been proved,—that some evangelist or teacher was the object of their choice, yet even that would neither evince any curtailment of their liberty, nor necessarily prove its improper exercise. They were left *freely* to choose; and their choice was doubtless right.

In the determination of the all-important question,—Whether circumcision was obligatory as a term of salvation and of church-fellowship?—a question which was likely to merge, as in fact it did, into apostolic inspiration and authority—the right of the church to share in the deliberations, and to be associated with its ministry in the entire proceedings, is allowed and exercised. In the account, Acts xv. &c., the following circumstances are strikingly observable:—On the arrival of Paul and Barnabas at Jerusalem, with the brethren deputed by the church at Antioch to accompany them, they were received by *the church*, together with the apostles and elders; when some of the believing Jews rose up and maintained the obligation of circumcision and of the Mosaic law. Another meeting having been appointed “to consider the matter,” and at which not only were the apos-

bles and elders present, but, "the multitude" also, there was "much disputing." This, however, could not have been among the apostles; for from the time of Peter's preaching to Cornelius, they were united and unvarying in their judgement. It must therefore have been among the elders, or multitude, or both. Peter then brought out the fact—that God had demonstrated his acceptance of Cornelius and his believing associates, though *uncircumcised*, by pouring out upon them the Holy Spirit and purifying their hearts by faith; and ended by denouncing the efforts of the Judaizing teachers as a tempting of God, and oppressive to the churches. Thus were the multitude prepared to "keep silence while Paul and Barnabas declared the miracles and wonders which God had wrought among the gentiles by them;" and while James proceeded to show how this harmonized with the predictions of the prophets, and stated his judgement to be, that no such yoke should be imposed, but that the gentiles should be directed to abstain from certain things, to some of which, though unlawful in themselves, they were peculiarly exposed in consequence of the usages of society; while the others, though not absolutely evil, might yet be stumbling blocks either to the Jews or to themselves; and were therefore inexpedient. The mind of the Spirit was thus brought out too strongly to be resisted. The judgement founded upon the facts adduced, commended itself to every man's conscience: and *it pleased the apostles, and elders, with the whole church, to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch, with Paul and Barnabas; namely, Judas surnamed Barsabas, and Silas, chief men among the brethren: And they wrote letters by them after this manner: The apostles and elders, and brethren, send greeting unto the brethren which are of the Gentiles in Antioch, and Syria, and Cilicia: Forasmuch as we have heard, that certain which went out from us have troubled you with words, subverting your souls, saying, Ye must be circumcised, and keep the law: to whom we gave no such commandment: It seemed good unto us, being assembled with one accord, to send chosen men unto you, with our beloved Barnabas and Paul,*

Men that have hazarded their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. We have sent therefore Judas and Silas, who shall also tell you the same things by mouth. For it seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than these necessary things; That ye abstain from meats offered to idols, and from blood, and from things strangled, and from fornication: from which if ye keep yourselves, ye shall do well. Fare ye well.

Nothing can exceed the clearness and consistency of this account; and, after all the attempts which have been made to encumber it with difficulties, or to shroud it in darkness, the facts stand too prominently out to be concealed by any human artifice — that “the multitude,” — the many, were associated with “the apostles and elders” in all the transactions of that memorable day; and not as passive spectators merely, but as active agents; — that they shared in the disquisitions; that they kept silence while the facts were stated and the reasonings were employed which evinced the mind of the Spirit; — that they concurred in the judgement given; — and that in their name, as associated with the apostles and elders, the letters were sent to the churches. And in all this, no more liberty was either conceded or exercised, than is involved in the passages previously cited — *Try the spirits — Prove all things — Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind — Though we, or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed; — or than was exercised by the Bereans, who searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.*

“The multitude” of which the church at Jerusalem was composed, knew what *had been* taught among them by the apostles; they deemed themselves able to understand what might *then* be taught; they, not less than the Bereans, could compare, and judge, and express their assent or dissent; and all this they were permitted to do even under the eyes of the apostles, and obviously with their approval.

The same liberty was extended to *the exercise of discipline in the churches.* This was implied in that direction given

by Christ to the disciples : — “ If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone : if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother. But if he will not hear *thee*, *then* take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the church : but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Matt. xviii. 15-17. On this passage, Watson very justly observes, —

“ Tell it to the church.”— The Jews would understand by this word the congregation collected in the synagogue ; for it was their practice to proclaim obstinate offenders there. So Maimonides, ‘ If any refuse to feed his children, they reprove him, they shame him, they urge him. If he still refuse, they make proclamation against him in the synagogue.’ But our Lord looks to the establishment of his own church, and the exercise of discipline in those assemblies of Christians, which though like the Jewish synagogues, they have the power of discipline within themselves, yet collectively form his universal church, as the synagogues collectively formed the general Jewish church. The apostles who then followed him, may be considered as the elements of his church at that time ; but it could scarcely be considered as constituted until after the day of Pentecost, when regular assemblies under apostolic direction were formed, the worship of God arranged, the Supper of the Lord administered, and the terms of communion mutually acknowledged. Christ must therefore be considered as speaking prospectively.”

“ ‘ *But if he neglect to hear the church, &c.*’ The great rules of church discipline are here most distinctly laid down. The church is to hear the case ; to advise and admonish in order to correct and save the offending person ; but if the admonitions and counsels of the church are obstinately disregarded, then the offender is to be put out of the communion, and to be to the injured person and to the church itself as a heathen man and a publican ; that is, all religious

connexion is to be broken off with him; he is, as St. Paul expresses it, to be 'put away.' But this is all: no civil disabilities are to be inflicted upon him, much less pains and penalties; and as our Lord treated 'heathens and publicans with compassion and kindness, and sought their salvation, so the advice he here gives is to be interpreted by his conduct; and the separated and disowned brother is still to be the object of charity and sympathy, and every means is to be taken to effect his restoration.'

"When a Christian injures his fellow-Christian, private admonition is the first duty. More than one attempt should be made to obtain satisfaction and restore fraternal affection. The mediation of others should be called into action. The influence of two or three witnesses should be brought to bear on the difficulty. It is only after the incorrigible perseverance of the offender in iniquity — after the failure of private admonition — that the matter should be carried before the Christian church to which the parties belong. Every offence, however trifling, should not be publicly brought before the church, any more than every measure. This would be unprofitable and injurious to the interests of the society. When the offender refuses to attend to the admonition of the church, persisting in his sin, he becomes unworthy of Christian communion, and must be excommunicated. 'Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.' Here there is no specification of church rulers or elders as distinct from the church itself, the body of the brethren. The entire society has to do with the case of discipline.

"Such is the rule of proceeding in dealing with private offences committed by one member against another, between whom if the matter be not settled, it is referred to the decision of the church, to which the two individuals belong." †

With this view the directions given by St. Paul to the Corinthian church perfectly harmonize. In an epistle to *the church*, or *saints*, at Corinth, he addresses to them the

† Davidson.

following reproof and injunction. "It is reported commonly that there is fornication among you, and such fornication as is not so much as named among the Gentiles, that one should have his father's wife. And ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among you. For I verily, as absent in body, but present in Spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, *concerning* him that hath so done this deed; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such a one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus."—1 Cor. v. 1-5. And when the neglected discipline had been exercised by the church, and the end of that discipline had been answered in the repentance of the offender, he wrote;—"Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore I beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him. For to this end also did I write, that I might know the proof of you, whether ye be obedient in all things."

In these passages, the mind unwarped by system cannot fail to see the following facts. 1, The church—"the many," who ultimately inflicted the punishment, *possessed the power* to remove from church-fellowship and to re-admit thereto:—2, their not having exercised that power in a case of atrocious criminality and public scandal, is charged upon them as a neglect of duty, and as furnishing just cause of censure:—3, while the apostle, both as their spiritual father and an inspired promulgator of the mind of Christ, authoritatively declares what they ought previously to have done, and *requires* them now to do it, he yet leaves the work with them, and enjoins it upon them, when met together, to excommunicate—or "deliver over to Satan" the transgressor,— "to purge out the old leaven,"—and to "put from among themselves the wicked person:."—4, when deep

repentance has both fitted the transgressor for Christian fellowship, and rendered it necessary to his spiritual comfort and safety, it is *their work* to “restore him” to fellowship—thus “to forgive him”—and “confirm their love towards him.” The privileges, duties, and responsibilities so plainly involved in these facts, are not affected by the circumstances — that the apostle had formed his own judgement on the case, and that he authoritatively enjoined the church to act agreeably to the mind of Christ ; — nor yet by the fact, that in every such transaction the churches acted in conjunction with their teachers ; as all this is perfectly compatible with every thing previously stated.

We have, in the passages thus examined, *the only full account which the New Testament gives of the manner in which discipline was exercised in the apostolic churches.* And, surely, it is not too much to affirm that it is an account utterly subversive of the theory, — “that the exercise of discipline is *the prerogative of the teaching ministry alone* ; and that *that ministry is alone responsible* for its due exercise.” No such exclusive responsibility was claimed by the apostle, either for himself or for the teaching ministry ; but all his statements were calculated, as they were doubtless intended, to establish the conviction in the minds of the members of the Corinthian church — “the many,” — that in the responsibilities connected with the due exercise of discipline, they, individually, and fully, shared.

Conclusions very different from the preceding, have, however, been drawn by the advocates of exclusive ministerial rights. One of the ablest of these, — an American Episcopalian, thus argues : — “Here is an act of church discipline, nothing less than excommunication ; and who inflicts it ? The elders at Corinth ? By no means. Paul does it. The apostle ‘judges’ and determines to ‘deliver to Satan’ the unworthy Christian ; and to do it when that church and ‘his spirit’ were assembled together, himself being in that sense present when his sentence was executed. Who read his sentence in the assembly, we are not informed ; probably *one of the elders.* Who ejected the man personally, if that

mode of executing the sentence were added to the reading of it, we are not told. It is enough that the 'judgement,' the decision, the authority for the discipline, was that of an apostle alone, and evinced his superiority, in ministerial functions, to the elders of that church. The excommunication led, of course, to the exclusion of the man from the friendship and kind offices of the brethren; and this is called his 'punishment inflicted of many,' in the passage we are next to quote.

" 'Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was *inflicted* of many. To whom ye forgive any thing, I *forgive* also: for if I forgave any thing, to whom I forgave it, for your sakes *forgave I it* in the person of Christ.' 2 Cor. ii. 6, 10. Here is a remission of discipline, not by the elders, but by an apostle: he pronounces the punishment to be 'sufficient.' The brethren forgive the scandal of the man's conduct, he having become penitent, and Paul forgives him, by removing the sentence. They forgave as men and fellow-Christians — he forgave 'in the person of Christ.'

" With such illustrations of an apostle's power to threaten discipline, to inflict discipline, and to remit discipline, we shall understand the force of the other passages in the Epistles to the Corinthians.

" 'Wherefore, though I wrote unto you, *I did it* not for his cause that had done the wrong, nor for his cause that suffered wrong, but that our care for you in the sight of God might appear unto you.' 2 Cor. vii. 12. 'For though I should boast somewhat more of our authority, which the Lord hath given us for edification, and not for your destruction, I should not be ashamed.' 2 Cor. x. 8. 'I told you before, and foretel you, as if I were present, the second time; and being absent now I write to them which heretofore have sinned, and to all other, that, if I come again, I will not spare. Therefore I write these things being absent, lest being present I should use sharpness, according to the power which the Lord hath given me to edification, and not to destruction.' 2 Cor. xiii. 2, 10."* This is the

* Dr. Onderdonk.

whole of the argument from the case in the church at Corinth as expounded by Dr. Onderdonk.

To the fallacious reasonings embodied in these passages, the following remarks by Dr. Wardlaw, furnish a complete answer.

“ 1. It seems an extraordinary assertion that ‘ there was no recognition of power in that church to judge or to censure.’ What says the apostle? In verse 12, he puts the question — a question which involves an affirmation — ‘ Do not ye judge them that are within?’ Is it not an express declaration that all who were ‘ within’ — that is, evidently, the members of the church — were by the law of Christ and the constitution of his churches, subjected to their judicial authority, — the members individually to the judgment of the church collectively? And to whomsoever it is that *judgement* is committed, it must follow, that in the same parties is lodged the power of *censure*. The *judicial* and the *executive* stand here in immediate connexion. The sentence and the censure are placed in the same hands : — ‘ Do not ye judge them that are within? Wherefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.’

“ 2. It must be evident to the most cursory attention, that the apostle reprehends the church for not having done sooner, and of their own accord, what he now enjoins them to do. In the second verse, the apostle says — ‘ Ye are puffed up, and have not rather mourned, that he who hath done this deed might be taken away from among you.’ Now *how* should he have been ‘ taken away from among them?’ By any other than themselves? By any other power, or any other act than their own? Assuredly not. The word here translated ‘ taken away,’ is the same which, in the thirteenth verse is rendered ‘ put away,’ when they are charged to excommunicate the offender. This, then, was what they *ought to have done before*. It is vain, therefore, to speak of its having been ‘ the apostle, and not the Corinthians that excommunicated the incestuous man.’ — For supposing this — not granting it — if it be admitted (*and how can it be denied?*) that in doing so, — in following

out his intimated decision,— he only did what it was *their previous duty to have done*, the argument from the passage is the very same. It ought, then, to have been done before :— that is, there were laws of discipline, which they ought before to have applied and executed, without requiring this decision and direction of the apostle :— and he evidently writes to them, not merely to inform them what to do, but to reprove them for not having already done it. And whatever be the way in which he here admonishes them now to set about the painful but necessary duty, the same was the way in which they ought to have set about it before.

“ 3. But it was not the apostle that excommunicated the incestuous man, *but the church*.— It is true that the apostle pronounces authoritatively, as an apostle, the law of Christ respecting the case. He tells the Corinthians what he himself had ‘judged,’ or determined, should be done in it. But this was not the man’s excommunication. It was, no doubt, their incumbent duty to acquiesce in this judgement, to pass sentence in accordance with it, and to carry the sentence into execution. What might have been the consequences to them, as a church, had they failed so to do, in those days when the power of the exalted Lord was lodged in the hands of his divinely accredited and endowed vicegerents, it is needless for us to enquire, or to conjecture. Our proper enquiry is, — what was the part which, in this matter, belonged to the church? And surely the passage leaves no room for doubt here. The man was not excommunicated till the church fulfilled the injunction — ‘put away from among yourselves that wicked person.’ They did fulfil it :— and then,

“ 4. We have further evidence, in the apostle’s own explicit testimony, that *it was not he* who excommunicated this offender, *but the church*,— and the church collectively.— It appears that the discipline had a salutary effect ; that the man had been brought to repentance ; and that he had intimated his desire to be restored to fellowship with his brethren. And in the passage in the second Epistle to the Corinthians, from which we learn this, we have at once evidence by whom he

had been cut off, and by whom he was to be restored. In 2 Cor. ii. 6-8, Paul thus writes:—‘Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many. So that contrariwise ye ought rather to forgive him, and comfort him, lest perhaps such a one should be swallowed up with over much sorrow. Wherefore *I* beseech you that ye would confirm your love toward him.’—Here, then, we learn by *whom* the punishment was inflicted, by whom the offender was excommunicated,—not by the apostle himself, but ‘by many;’ that is, if we are to allow words to have their obvious meaning, *by the church collectively*. And from the same passage we further learn, that by the same associate act he was to be restored,—reinstated in communion with the church, in the privileges of his former membership, and the enjoyment of the ‘brotherly love’ which by his grievous trespass he had for the time forfeited. The church had cut him off, and the church was to restore him. Paul enjoins both; and the same kind of argument by which it is alleged that the apostle, and not the Corinthians, excommunicated him, will equally prove that the apostle, and not the Corinthians gave him back his church status. And on the very same principle might it be affirmed still, that a church, when obeying apostolic direction in any case, does nothing; that it is still the apostle, and not the church, that both judges and censures, that both pronounces and executes the sentence.”

Here, then, in a case of known and admitted sin, St. Paul, in the high character of an apostle, and in the yet more endearing character of a spiritual father, declares the law of Christian duty, and his judgement respecting the transgressor. Yet inasmuch as the church possessed the power of excommunication, but had sinfully abstained from exercising it, he calls upon it to repent of its sin, and faithfully to discharge a duty equally required by the law of Christ, the honour of religion, and the welfare of the transgressor; and, on the transgressor's repentance, he directs his restoration to fellowship. Thus carefully did the apostle, while *exercising* apostolic and ministerial authority, *recognize and guard the rights of the church*.

The same power is clearly recognized in other parts of the New Testament. Directions relative to the admission to church fellowship and removal from it are given, not to officers alone — as Timothy, or Titus, or the elders ; but to the churches collectively. “The saints which be at Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints,” --- are thus addressed : — “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things : another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not ; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth : for God hath received him. Wherefore receive ye one another, as Christ also received us to the glory of God. Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and avoid them.” — Rom. xiv. 1-3 ; xv. 7 ; xvi. 17. The churches of Galatia, as has been already shown, are directed to anathematize or excommunicate, whoever preached *any other gospel than that which had been preached* ; but to restore, in the spirit of meekness, those who had been overtaken in a fault.

“The Church of the Thessalonians,” as *contra-distinguished from its rulers*, is thus addressed : —

“And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you. And to esteem them very highly in love for their work’s sake. And be at peace among yourselves. Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.” — 1 Thes. v. 12-14.

The believing Hebrews, the “holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling,” are thus directed : — “Lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees ; and make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way ; but let it rather be healed. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God ; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled ; lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as

Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright."— Heb. xii. 12, 13, 15, 16.

And not to "the angel" only, but to *the church* at Pergamos, the warning was given:—"I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam who taught Balac to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication. So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth. — Rev. ii. 14-16."

So far, indeed, is the New Testament from supporting the doctrine, — that official appointments, and the exercise of discipline in the churches, for the preservation of doctrinal purity and practical holiness there, are the exclusive prerogatives of the stated ministry, and that all corresponding responsibilities rest (as indeed in such case they ought to rest) *on that ministry alone*, — that, both the history of the churches, as it is there presented, and the exhortations, and commands, and threatenings addressed to them, furnish evidence the clearest and the most abundant, that in these privileges and duties *the churches* fully shared, and that to them, as well as to their officers, corresponding responsibilities attached. It is, in fact, difficult to conceive how duty could be more clearly or strongly expressed, than in the following commands: — "Tell it to the church, and if he will not hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican;" "Put away from yourselves that wicked person;" — "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye;" — "Though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed;" — "Withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly." And equally difficult is it to see how responsibility can be more fully set forth, than in the following statements: — "Ye have not mourned;" — "I speak to your shame;" — "Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? No, not one that shall be able to judge between his brethren;" — "Ye sorrowed after a godly

sort, what carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal, yea, what revenge. In all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter. Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage." "Behold I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing;" — "Take heed how ye hear;" — "They be blind leaders of the blind; and if the blind lead the blind they shall *both* fall into the ditch;" "Prove all things: hold fast that which is good;" "If there come any and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds;" "Remember, therefore, how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If, therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee;" "Thou hast them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitanes, which thing I hate. Repent, or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth;" "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works: or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent."

If there be truth or justice in representations like these, responsibilities must attach to *the churches*, as well as to their stated ministers, or other officers, whatever, or whoever those other officers may be; and the claims of any hierarchy, however constituted, to a divine right to appoint officers in the churches and to exercise discipline there, on their exclusive responsibility; or, as being alone accountable to Christ for the purity of the churches' faith and worship, and for their practical conformity to the divine law, must be as incompatible with the New Testament as they are with the principles of liberty so justly recognized in all the civil and social institutions of our country. Viewed in the light furnished by apostolic writings and institutions only, the same

rights, and duties, and responsibilities are seen attaching to the associated ecclesiastical body as are discovered by enlightened reason to attach to the body politic. Instead of the essential dissimilarity for which some have so eagerly contended, that uniformity is found which the enlightened and unambitious would expect to find, and in which they must rejoice ; and in *the church*, as well as in the political and social relations of life, men are seen exercising the rights, discharging the duties, and sharing the responsibilities, connected with an intellectual and a morally accountable nature, and which so deeply affect their common interests. To whatever extent, therefore, churches may choose, by conventional arrangements, to direct, or allow, the functions of government to be exercised by ministers, or by others associated with them, yet as they cannot divest themselves of the responsibilities under which their common Master has laid them, nor allow the existence of doctrinal or practical corruption, whether *actively introduced* by their rulers, or *passively permitted* by them, without incurring the displeasure of that Master, the powers of control, supervision, dissent, censure, and removal, must still be inherent in the body, and must, if divine approval is to be secured, be sometimes exercised. Neither is there in all this any necessary interference with the duties and responsibilities of the ministry. On that ministry it still devolves — and the duties are imperative — to exhibit, in all their clearness and power, not only those truths which directly involve the honour of the Father, — the Son — and the Holy Spirit — and the salvation of the souls of men ; but those also which relate to the institutions and order of the churches, with their worship, and government, and discipline. Ministers have still ample liberty to *exercise themselves unto godliness : to be examples of the believers in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity ;* and they have liberty fully to carry out the injunctions, — *Rebuke not an elder, but entreat him as a father ; and the younger men as brethren ; the elder women as mothers ; the younger as sisters, with all purity. Preach the word ; be instant in season, and out of season ; reprove, rebuke,*

exhort with all long-suffering and doctrine. They may conduct the worship of the religious assemblies — exercise a general superintendence over all the affairs of their respective churches, — preside in their meetings, — either alone, or in conjunction with the other officers, they may prepare and bring under consideration, those measures which the purity, and peace, and extension of the churches may require, — and, with the concurrence of the churches, they may formally admit to office or remove from it, — receive into fellowship, — censure, or excommunicate. Thus they may *make full proof of their ministry*; and rule well *the church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood.*

It has, however, been contended, that so to limit the teaching ministry, is to divest it of authority, and to withhold from it all power to rule. A man justly celebrated in the annals of Methodism, has objected,* “That there is in these systems, not a provision of counsel against possible errors in the exercise of authority; not a guard against human infirmity or viciousness; not a reservation of right to determine upon the fitness of the cases to which the laws of Christ are applied; but a claim of co-administration as to these laws themselves, or rather an entire administration of them through the Pastor, as a passive agent of their will.”

In still more forcible terms, Dr. Mc Kerrow has objected; — “If in each congregation, all the members have the power of ruling, then the question presents itself, whom are they to obey? According to the doctrine which I am combating, all rule, and yet they are commanded to obey. Obey whom? The only answer that can be given to this question, on the supposition that all rule, is that they are to obey themselves. If this be not a contradiction in terms, it sounds very much like one. To speak of all ruling and all obeying — ruling themselves and obeying themselves. I do not see, how such a conclusion as this (absurd though it be) can be avoided, if we are to receive the doctrine, that all the members of the churches are in-

* Watson.

vested equally with the power of government. They would, according to this supposition, have the double character of rulers and subjects.

“To avoid this incongruity, it may be affirmed, that though the power of government is lodged in the body of the people, yet this power may be delegated by them to office-bearers, whom they appoint to rule over them; and that, on the ground of this delegated authority, they may yield them subjection—or they may rule in conjunction with the office-bearers:—this supposition does not remove the incongruity now stated. For it supposes them still to be rulers, possessing a joint authority with their office-bearers—and the question still reverts, whom are they to obey? Again, if they consider their office-bearers as receiving a delegated authority from them, and as entitled to subjection from them on this ground,—I answer, that the New Testament recognizes no such authority as this; namely, an authority exercised by the office-bearers, which has been delegated to them by their fellow-men. The apostle Paul, as we have already seen, expressly mentions that the authority, which he and his fellow-labourers exercised in the government of the church, was given them by Christ. He reminds the churches, that their rulers were over them in the Lord. He styles them Christ’s ministers—God’s stewards—and he speaks of them as watching for souls, “as they that must give an account.” This account they must not render to men, but to Christ, who has counted them to be faithful, putting them into the ministry. Members of the church have the privilege (and a very valuable one it is) of choosing those who are to take the oversight of them. But the call, given by the people to their office-bearers, does not confer any authority either to preach or to rule. This authority is conferred by their being ordained, in the name of Christ, by those whom Christ has appointed to perform this solemn act, namely, the presbytery or eldership.”

We are also told that our conclusions are incompatible with the facts,—that on the day of Pentecost, the multitudes

converted could not have been individually examined in the presence of the church, and approved: Philip alone baptized the eunuch, and many in Samaria: Annanias baptized Paul: and Timothy and Titus were directed how to discharge the functions of government, without any reference being made in the directions given, to the concurrence of the churches.

In reply to the last of these statements, it has been well observed by Davidson — “ This reasoning proceeds on the assumption, that ordinary pastors come into the place of apostles, of men gifted with inspiration and infallibility; and of evangelists, who also possessed extraordinary endowments. The assumption, however, should have been proved. As soon as it is *proved*, we shall allow the conclusiveness of the argument. Till that be done, it is sufficient to confront it with the simple affirmation, ordinary elders do not represent apostles and evangelists; so that they may *unhesitatingly* and *legitimately* do whatever devolved on primitive and temporary office-bearers. The extraordinary circumstances also in which the apostles and evangelists acted, present a striking contrast to the circumstances of Christian churches at the present day. There is no proper analogy between the examples adduced and the case of ordinary officers.

“ With regard to the three thousand added to the church at Jerusalem, it must be recollected that the apostles were present and sanctioned the proceeding. And when the apostles acted so, the church must have been satisfied, inasmuch as they had authority over all the churches, and were gifted with inspiration for the infallible determination of all measures relating to ecclesiastical organization. In the presence of apostles, there was no need of examining members for admission into churches. The fact that they were satisfied of the belief of the three thousand, rendered individual examination superfluous. In regard to Philip's baptizing many, as well as the Ethiopian eunuch, the case is foreign to the point. The baptizing of adults is not identical with the admission of them as members into a church. Baptism was not the only qualification for member-

ship. Such persons though baptized, were not necessarily fitted to be members of churches."

To this we may add, — that the right of the church to a voice in the election of officers and the admission and removal of members, harmonized so fully with the social and religious associations and habits of all the parties concerned, as to render such reference to the right unnecessary; and established as that right is, by positive proofs so varied and so abundant, the mere omission of reference to it in other cases cannot be allowed to invalidate it, without the admission of a principle by which almost every fact and doctrine recorded in the scriptures might be disproved, and all history converted into an inextricable tissue of contradictions.

To the objection, that "All rule, and yet all are commanded to obey:" it might be sufficient to reply, that the magistrate whose business it is only to point out the proper application of the laws voluntarily enacted by the whole community, — to pronounce sentence according to them, and direct the execution of them, is truly a ruler or governor; and that he who is subjected to the operation of a law consented to or even *proposed* by himself, is really governed and ruled. A judge in a British court of judicature does not cease to be "a magistrate," because the question of guilt has to be determined by a jury; neither are municipal and voluntary associations lawless, because their regulations are self-imposed; nor are their respective officers without honour and power, because in the interpretation and execution of the laws their judgement and will are not absolute.

But to the objection, that "*All rule, and yet they are commanded to obey,*" the following reply by Dr. Wardlaw is too pertinent to be omitted here.

"As no one will contend for a power that is independent and absolute, there must be limits in the courts of assembled representatives, as well as with the eldership of individual churches. — The difficulty, it may here be remarked, is, substantially, the same in kind, with regard to *laws*, as with regard to *doctrines*, — in the department of *rule*, as in the department of *instruction*, and the analogy between the two

is deserving of notice, as illustrative of an important principle on our present subject. There is no power to add either to the laws or to the doctrines of Christ. The pastors are bound to rule according to existing laws, just as they are bound to teach according to existing doctrines. In the one department, as in the other, they have no authority either to keep within, or to go beyond, the revealed mind of Christ. And no church can be under obligation to obey any laws but those of Christ, any more than it can be under obligation to receive any doctrines but those of Christ. Their setting a pastor over them to *teach*, does not imply a surrender of the right, or a dereliction of the duty, to judge of his doctrine:—so neither does their setting a pastor over them to *rule*, imply a surrender of the right, or a dereliction of the duty, to judge of his administration. It is their right and their duty to judge his doctrine by the *instructions* of Christ; and it is equally their right and their duty to judge his administration by the *laws* of Christ. If it belong to them to see that they are taught according to Christ's doctrine, it must belong to them on the very same principle, to see that they are governed according to Christ's laws."

"The business, then, of the pastorate or eldership, we take to be this:—to preside in the church;—to see that 'all things be done decently and in order;'—to point out the law of Christ in its application to particular cases;—to have these cases so matured for statement, as to make both their own nature and the bearing of the law of Christ upon them as clear and simple as possible;—to urge upon the brethren a faithful adherence, not to the letter of the law only, but also to the spirit in which all the discipline of the House of God ought to be conducted; the spirit of humble self-diffidence, and compassion, of love to the offender, blended with indignant zeal against the offence, and grief for the dishonour done by it to the Head of the church.

"Thus, it is not properly a system of *popular rule*, but of *pastoral direction* and *popular concurrence* in the application and execution of the laws of Christ; his authority being

throughout, held and felt to be paramount. The submission enjoined, is submission to the presiding and directing pastor or pastors, as the divinely authorized organ, by whom, in each case, the law of Christ is to be pointed out, and with the concurrent judgement and voice of the church, to be carried into execution."

Little less than this is conceded by Watson, who, while justly denouncing every system of suffrages, or popular concurrence which makes the exercise of ministerial authority "*absolutely* and in *all cases* dependent upon the will of those over whom it extends,"—yet acknowledges, that "when the pastors err in doctrine, the people are enjoined not to receive them;"—that "the rule which forbids Christians 'to eat,' that is, to communicate at the Lord's Table with an immoral 'brother,' held, of course, good, when that brother was a pastor:"—and that, though "members of a church have no right to obstruct the just exercise" of the power of the minister to admit to its fellowship, yet "they have the right to prevent its being unworthily exercised."

Any such explanation of the authority possessed by the teaching ministry, and the obedience due to it from the churches, as would deprive them of any of the liberties shown in the preceding pages to have been recognized by the apostles, is a virtual subversion of their authority as teachers and examples; it deceives, by substituting a *part* only of the divine testimony for *the whole*; and it *uproots the foundations of liberty, whether civil or religious*. Let the same rule of interpretation be extended—as it has been, and as, if correct, it ought to be—to those passages, which, in *still stronger terms*, and in *more absolute forms*, enjoin obedience to *civil* governors, as *divinely appointed*, and every principle of liberty is subverted on which the British constitution rests, and in which we, as Britons, glory. The fact is,—and it becomes us to bring and to keep it the more strongly out, in consequence of the unceasing efforts of the advocates of hierarchal authority to conceal it,—that the *principles of freedom* are the same, both in civil and religious

society ; the *reasons* on which freedom rests in both cases are the same ; so are the rules of interpretation applicable to the laws which require obedience to civil and ecclesiastical government : and the application of rules to the latter, incompatible with the freedom which is acknowledged to exist in the former of these, is not only a violation of rectitude, and a palpable inconsistency, but it is calculated, both by the establishment of erroneous views and the formation of slavish habits, to prepare the mind for the surrender of every right which counterfeit authority may demand and for submission to universal bondage.

Under the limitations contended for in the preceding pages, the duties of the teaching ministry sustain the highest character, and to the proper discharge of them the most fearful responsibility attaches. It is still for those who are called to that ministry, faithfully to present before both saints and sinners the word of eternal life ; — both in public and in private to watch and labour for souls as those who must give account ; — to exercise vigilant oversight in relation to every thing that concerns the welfare of the church, ascertaining both the things needful to be done and the fittest instruments for every work ; — to point out to all their respective duties, and the sanctions which enforce them ; — to preside in the meetings of the church for the transaction of its business and the exercise of discipline, and there not only explain the laws of Christ and of the church, in relation to every thing proposed or necessary to be done, but also urge obedience by all the considerations which either reason or revelation supply, and in all the ways which natural and acquired capabilities allow. And on them it still devolves, agreeably to the laws of Christ, to carry out the decisions of the church-meetings, — administering discipline — admitting to membership or office, or removing therefrom. To all this they are imperatively bound by the relations in which they stand to Christ and the church. For all this they are *personally responsible*. Christ authoritatively commands, and the church most righteously expects it. And he who in all this does not

see a work sufficiently important to call forth all his powers, and sufficiently honourable to satisfy his highest holy ambition, and, at the same time, responsibilities sufficient to impel to every duty, and to sustain under every exertion, must have an understanding and a heart as unaccordant with the entire spirit of christianity as they are with the rights of christian churches.

That the principle of religious liberty embodied by the founders of the Methodist New Connexion in its system of government, are hallowed by apostolic authority, and that they existed in the churches whose history is recorded in the New Testament, is, surely, abundantly evinced. In details, dissimilarity may, indeed, be found. These, in the exercise of that liberty which has been shown to exist, were adapted by them to the actual state of things and the expressed wishes of the churches. But they placed both essentials and circumstantials each on its proper ground. They maintained the divine right of the ministry "to teach, exhort, and rebuke with all authority;"—to occupy the chief place in ruling the churches, and to honour and cheerful obedience, so long as their teaching and ruling shall be in accordance to the law and spirit of the gospel. But they also maintained the equally divine right of the churches to a concurrent voice with the ministry in the admission and removal of members; the appointment of officers; the general direction of affairs; and the exercise of the church's discipline; together with a power in the churches to control or remove a minister, whenever error in doctrine, immorality of life, or negligence in duty might require it. They, however, contended for no such right for *the particular modes* by which the public judgement should be collected, and governmental functions exercised; nor yet for *the particular channels* through which the voice of the churches should be expressed. These, together with the itinerant character of their ministry; the presbyterian, or connexional union of the churches; and other minor arrangements, they were content to rest on their true ground, the ground of *expediency* alone. An expediency, however, which, in their

view, strictly harmonized with every principle represented as obligatory in the New Testament; and which the entire history of Methodism had unfolded, under circumstances so peculiar, yet so consecutive and harmonious, as to present the impress of providential combinations, and so abundant in the holiest fruits, as to furnish the best evidence of divine approval. While, therefore, they justly condemned and renounced an authority which they believed to be subversive of the rights of the churches, and the source of many evils, they with equal justice retained arrangements which God had so signally honoured, and the beneficial results of which the entire Christian world had witnessed.

Having thus seen that the ecclesiastical polity of the Methodist New Connexion — more especially as it relates to the right of suffrage in the election of its officers, and its associated eldership in the entire government of the churches — rests broadly and firmly on that only *sure* foundation, the New Testament, — a fact, to overturn which, all the means have been employed which perverted powers, and equally perverted literary acquirements could furnish, — our examination of the remaining branches of this article will be brief; partly in consequence of the comparative unimportance of what remains, though chiefly on account of the article having already reached its originally prescribed limits.

It is acknowledged on almost all hands, that had we to ascertain the precise constitution and usages of the post-apostolic churches from the remaining writings of the fathers of the two first centuries alone, the task would be a difficult or an impossible one. The fewness and character of those writings — but more especially the rapid changes introduced by declining piety and the workings of human passion, lead to this result.

That in the churches founded by the apostles, and even before their removal from them, ambition lifted up its head and commenced that career of ecclesiastical enthrallment which issued in the revelation “of the man of sin sitting in the temple of God, and exalting himself above all that

is called God," is sufficiently clear from the records of the New Testament. Not only was there a "Diotrephes who loved to have the pre-eminence," but teachers were found in the Corinthian and Galatian churches, whose combined vanity and ambition led them to impeach the motives, and depreciate the ministrations, and question or deny the apostleship, of him whose self-denying and self-consuming zeal, transcendent powers, and evidence of apostleship, seemed to place beyond the reach of attack. Justly therefore, did he characterize them as "False apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ," and their corresponding conduct, as borne by the churches, he thus correctly represented:—"Ye suffer it, if a man bring you into bondage, if a man devour you, if a man take of you, [seize on your possessions,] if a man exalt himself, if a man smite you on the face." And he foresaw and foretold that among the elders of the Ephesian Church, men would arise "speaking perverse things, to draw away disciples after them," and that "greivous wolves would enter in among them, not sparing the flock."

Had the love of power thus early and extensively manifested, prevailed so far as to effect the subversion of the liberties of the apostolic churches even during the first century, and could no subsequent trace of them be found, the fact already proved would still remain,—that those liberties were established in them under the authority of their Divine Head; and the conclusion would be legitimate and inevitable, that those liberties are still their rightful inheritance. Happily, however, for the cause of truth and the honour of Christianity, this result was prevented by the extent to which the self-denying spirit of the gospel and the hallowing flame of its zeal and love animated the breasts of Christian pastors, and the enlightened attachment to their liberties which was cherished by the churches. Though, therefore, the effects of the encroachment of power, and of the advances so soon made towards the establishment of a hierarchy, may be easily traced, yet *sufficient* is found in the records of Christian antiquity to

prove that the churches long retained, with various modifications, their associated eldership, together with a voice in the admission to membership and office, and in the determination of all important matters relating either to discipline or government.

On this subject, the following testimonies, principally selected from Professor Miller will suffice.

“ Before we proceed, it may not be improper to make two general remarks. The first is, — that we must be on our guard against the ambiguous use of the title elder, as it is expressed in different languages. When we look into the writings of the Christian Fathers who lived during the first two hundred years after Christ, all of whom, if we except Tertullian, wrote in Greek, we find them generally using the word *πρεσβυτερος* to designate an elder. Now this is precisely the same word which the advocates of Prelacy apply to the “second order,” as they express it, of their “clergy,” always called by them “presbyters.” And when Presbyterians translate this word by the term *elder*, and consider it as used, at least in many cases, to designate that class of officers which forms the subject of this essay, they are considered and represented, by some illiterate and narrow minded persons, as chargeable with an unfair, if not a deceptive use of a term. This charge is manifestly unjust. It will never be repeated by any candid individual, who is acquainted with the Greek language. This is the very word which is almost invariably used by the translators of the Septuagint, all through the Old Testament, to designate elders who confessedly had nothing to do with preaching. In truth, it was a general title of office among the Jews, and it was a general title of office among the early Christians, as any one will immediately perceive by a candid perusal of the New Testament. The word “elder” is the natural, literal, and, we may almost say, the only proper term by which to express the meaning of the Greek title *πρεσβυτερος*.

“ The second preliminary remark is, that perhaps no class of church officers would be, on the whole, so likely to fall into disrepute after the apostolic age, and be discontinued,

as that which is now under consideration. We know that the purity of the church began to decline immediately after the apostolic age, Nay, while the apostles were still alive, 'the mystery of iniquity' had already begun 'to work.' Corruption, both in faith and practice, had crept in, and, in some places, to an alarming and most distressing extent. And after their departure, it soon 'came in like a flood.' The discipline of the church became relaxed, and after a while, in a great measure prostrated.

"But this is not all. Shortly after the apostolic age, several ecclesiastical officers, as is confessed on all hands, were either invented or modified, so as to suit the declining spirituality of the times. To mention but a single example. The deacons began to claim higher dignity and powers. Sub-deacons were introduced to perform some of those functions which had originally belonged to deacons, but which they had become too proud to perform. Was it either unnatural, then or improbable — since things of a similar kind actually took place — that in the course of the undeniable degeneracy which was now reigning, the ruling elders of the church should find the employment to which they had been originally destined, irksome both to themselves and others; by no means adapted to gratify either the love of gain, or the love of pleasure which seemed to be the order of the day; — and that both parties gradually united in dropping the inspection and discipline once committed to their hands, and in turning their attention to objects more adapted to the taste of ambitious worldly minded churchmen.

"Keeping these things in mind, let us examine whether some, both of the early and the late fathers, do not express themselves in a manner which renders it probable, or rather certain, that they had in view the class of elders of which we are speaking.

"In the epistle of Clemens Romanus, who lived toward the close of the first century, to the church at Corinth, we find the worthy father remonstrating with the members of the church for having risen up against their elders, and

thrust them out of office — perhaps for the very reason just hinted at — that they found their inspection and rule uncomfortable. Accordingly Clemens addresses the Corinthian Christians in the following manner: — ‘It is a shame, my beloved, yea, a very great shame, to hear that the most firm and ancient church of the Corinthians should be led, by one or two persons, to rise up against their elders.’ (πρεσβυτερους) Again; ‘Let the flock of Christ enjoy peace with the elders (πρεσβυτερους) that are set over it.’ Again; ‘Do ye, therefore, who first laid the foundation of this sedition, submit yourselves to your elders, and be instructed into repentance, bending the knee of your hearts;’ Epist. 47, 54, 57.

‘In these extracts we find an entire coincidence with the language of the New Testament; a plain indication that in every church there was a plurality of elders; and a distinct recognition of the idea that these elders were rulers, in other words, held a station of authority and government over “the flock” of which they were officers.

“In the epistles of Ignatius, who lived at the close of the first, and the beginning of the second century, we find much said about elders, (πρεσβυτεροι.) The following is a specimen of the manner in which he speaks of them, in connection with the other classes of church officers. ‘Obey your bishop and the presbytery (the eldership) with an entire affection.’ ‘There is one cup, and one altar, and also one bishop, together with his eldership, and the deacons, my fellow-servants.’ Again, ‘I cried whilst I was among you; I spake with a loud voice, attend to the bishop, to the eldership, and to the deacons.’

“The friends of Prelacy have long been in the habit of insisting much on these and similar quotations from Ignatius, as affording decisive support to their system. But I must think their confidence in this witness has not the smallest solid ground. For, let it be remembered that these several epistles were directed, not to large prelatial dioceses, but to single parishes or congregations; that in each of these churches there are represented as being a bishop, a presbytery, or bench of elders, and a plurality

of deacons ; and, therefore, that it is parochial episcopacy, and not diocesan or prelatical, that is here described. And, accordingly, we learn from different parts of these epistles, that in the time of Ignatius, each bishop had under his pastoral charge, but 'one altar,' 'one cup,' 'one loaf,' i.e. one communion table ; and that the people under his care habitually came together to 'one place,'—in other words, formed 'one assembly.' "

" Again, Polycarp, writing to the church of Phillipi, most evidently and unequivocally conveys the idea, that there was a plurality of Presbyters (or elders,) not only in his own church, but also in that to which he wrote, and that they were the regularly appointed ecclesiastical rulers. He addressed them thus : ' Let the elders be tender and merciful, compassionate towards all, reclaiming those which have fallen into errors ; visiting all that are weak ; not negligent of the widow and the orphan, and of him that is poor, but ever providing what is honest in the sight of God and men ; abstaining from all wrath, respect of persons, and unrighteous judgement ; avoiding covetousness ; not hastily believing a report against any man ; not rigid in judgement, knowing that we are all faulty and obnoxious to judgement.' [Epistle to the Philippians, Sect. 6.]

" Cyprian in his 29th epistle, directed ' to his brethren, the elders and deacons,' expresses himself in the following terms :—

" ' You are to take notice that I have ordained Saturus a reader, and the confessor Optatus a sub-deacon, whom we had all before agreed to place in the rank and degree next to that of the clergy. Upon Easter day, we made one or two trials of Saturus, in reading, when we were approving our readers before *the teaching presbyters*, and then appointed Optatus from among the readers, to be a teacher of the hearers.' On this passage, the Rev. Mr. Marshall, the Episcopal translator and commentator of Cyprian, remarks, — ' It is hence, I think, apparent, that all presbyters were not teachers, but assisted the bishop in other parts of his office.' "

“Origen, who it is well known, flourished a little more than two hundred years after Christ, in the following passage has a plain reference to the class of officers under consideration :— ‘There are some rulers appointed whose duty it is to inquire concerning the manners and conversation of those who are admitted, that they may debar from the congregation such as commit filthiness.’ [Contra Celsum. Lib. iii. p. 142. Edit. Cantab. 1677.] This passage is replete with important and conclusive testimony. It not only proves that, in the time of Origen, there were rulers in the Christian church, but that the chief and peculiar business of these rulers was precisely that which we assign to ruling elders, viz., inspecting the members of the church, watching over all its spiritual interests, admitting to its communion those who, on inquiry, were found worthy, and debarring those who were in any way immoral. It is perfectly evident from this passage alone, that in the days of this learned father, the government and discipline of the church were not conducted by the body of the communicants at large, but by a bench of rulers.”

“In the *Gesta Purgationis Caciliani et Felicis*, preserved at the end of Optatus, and commonly referred to the beginning of the fourth century, we meet with the following enumeration of church officers : ‘*Presbyteri, Diaconi et Seniores*,’—*i.e.* ‘The Presbyters, the Deacons and the Elders.’ And a little after is added :— ‘*Adhibite conclericos, et Seniores plebis, ecclesiasticos viros, et inquirant diligenter quæ sint ista dissentiones*,’—*i.e.* ‘Call the fellow-clergymen and elders of the people, ecclesiastical men, and let them inquire diligently what are these dissentions.’ In that assembly, likewise, several letters were produced and read ; one addressed, ‘*Clero et Senioribus*,’—*i.e.* ‘to the clergy and the elders ;’ and another, ‘*Clericis et Senioribus*,’—*i.e.* ‘to the clergymen and the elders.’ Here, then, is a class of men expressly recognized as ecclesiastical men, or church officers ; who are styled elders ; who were constituent members of a solemn ecclesiastical assembly or judicatory ; who were expressly charged with inquiring into matters connected with the

discipline of the church; and yet carefully distinguished from the clergy, with whom they met, and officially united in the transaction of business. If these be not the elders of whom we are in search, we may give up all the rules of evidence."

"Ambrose, who lived in the fourth century, in his commentary on 1 Timothy v. 1, has the following passage: 'For, indeed, among all nations old age is honourable. Hence it is that the synagogue, and afterwards the church, had elders, without whose counsel nothing was done in the church; which by what negligence it grew into disuse I know not, unless, perhaps, by the sloth, or rather by the pride of the teachers, while they alone wished to appear something.' The great body of the Prelatists, as well as some others, have laboured hard to divest this passage of its plain and pointed testimony in favour of the office of ruling elder. They insist upon it that the pious father had no reference whatever to ecclesiastical officers, but only to aged persons, and that he meant to say nothing more than that, formerly in the synagogue, and afterwards in the church, there were old men, whom it was customary to consult; which practice, however, at the time in which he wrote, was generally laid aside. This perversion of an obvious meaning, is really so strange and extravagant, that the formality of a serious refutation seems scarcely necessary. Can any reflecting man believe that Hilary designed only to inform his readers that in the Jewish synagogues there were actually persons who had attained a considerable age; that this was also afterwards the case in the Christian church; and that these aged persons were generally consulted? This would have been a sage remark indeed! Was there ever a community of any extent, either ecclesiastical or civil, which did not include some aged persons? Or was there ever a state of society, or an age of the world, in which the practice of consulting the aged and experienced had fallen into disuse? That thinking, candid minds, should be able to satisfy themselves with such a gloss, is truly wonderful."

“ But there is a clause in this extract from Ambrose, which precludes all doubt that he intended to allude to a class of church officers, and not merely to old age. It is this: — ‘ Which by what negligence it grew into disuse, I know not, unless, perhaps, by the sloth, or rather by the pride of *the teachers*, who wished alone to appear something.’ It is very conceivable and obvious that both the pride and the sloth of the teachers, or teaching elders, should render them willing to get rid of a bench of officers of equal power with themselves, as rulers in the church, and consequently able to control their wishes in cases of discipline. But it cannot easily be conceived why either sloth or pride should render any so particularly averse to all consultation with the aged and experienced, in preference to the young, on the affairs of the church: especially if these aged persons bore no office, and there was of course, no official obligation to be governed by their advice, as the gloss under consideration supposes.”

“ Augustine, bishop of Hippo, who also lived toward the close of the fourth century, often refers to this class of officers in his writings. Thus, in his work, *Contra Cresconium Grammaticum*, lib. iii. cap. 56, he speaks of ‘ *Peregrinus, Presbyter, et Seniores Ecclesiæ Musticanae regionis* ;’ — *i.e.* ‘ Peregrine, the presbyter, and the elder of the church of the Mustacan district.’ And again, he addresses one of his epistles intended for his church at Hippo, in the following manner: — ‘ *Dilectissimis Fratribus, Clero, Senioribus et universæ Plebi Ecclesiæ Hipponensis* ;’ Epist. 137, — *i.e.* ‘ To the beloved brethren, the clergy, the elders, and all the people of the church at Hippo.’ There were some elders then, in the time of Augustine, whom he distinguishes from other presbyters, and whom he also distinguishes from the clergy. And, lest any should suppose that the elders here spoken of were not officers, but mere private members of the church, he distinguishes them from the *plebs universa* of the church. It is true, indeed, that Bingham insists upon it that these were not ruling elders, in our sense of the word; but that they held some kind of office in the

church, and yet were not public preachers, he explicitly grants. We ask nothing more. This is quite sufficient for our purpose."

"Another strong argument in support of the doctrine of ruling elders, as drawn from the early fathers, is found in the abundant evidence which their writings furnish, that during the first three or four centuries after Christ, the great body of the Christian presbyters did not ordinarily preach, indeed never, but by the special permission of the bishop or pastor. The following statement by the learned Bingham, in his *Origines Ecclesiasticæ*, book ii. chapter iii. section 4. will be found conclusive on this point: —

"The like observation may be made upon the office of preaching. This was in the first place the bishop's office, which they commonly discharged themselves, especially in the African churches. Which is the reason we so frequently meet with the phrase, *Tractante Episcopo* the bishop preaching, in the writings of Cyprian. For then it was so much the office and custom of bishops to preach, that no presbyter was permitted to preach in their presence, till the time of St. Austin, who, whilst he was a presbyter, was authorized by Valerius, his bishop, to preach before him. But that, as Possidius, the writer of his life observes, was so contrary to the use and custom of the African churches, that many bishops were highly offended at it, and spoke against it; till the consequence proved that such a permission was of good use and service to the church; and then several other bishops granted their presbyters power and privilege to preach before them."

"The truth of the matter seems to have been this. A large majority of the officers called elders, in the three first centuries, were, no doubt ruling elders — ordained, it is probable, in the same manner with the teaching elders, — *i.e.* with 'the laying on of hands,' and the same external solemnity in every respect. They were not qualified, and were not expected, when ordained, to be preachers; but were selected, on account of their piety, gravity, prudence, and experience, to assist in inspection and government. When,

however, the bishop or pastor, who was the stated preacher, was sick, or absent, he might direct a ruling elder to take his place on a single occasion, or for a few Sabbaths. But this function made no part of their stated work; and they seldom engaged in it. After a while, however, these elders, like the bishops on the one hand, and the deacons on the other, began to aspire; were more and more frequently permitted to preach; until, at length, non-preaching elders were chiefly banished from the church. As this was a gradual thing, they were, of course, retained in some churches longer than others. They were, probably, first laid aside in large cities, where ambition was most prevalent, laxity of morals most indulged, and strict discipline most unpopular. In this way things proceeded, until this class of officers was almost wholly lost sight of in the Christian community.

“One more testimony, by no means unimportant, of the existence of this office in the primitive church, is to be found in the Rev. Dr. Buchanan’s account of the Syrian Christians, contained in his *Asiatic Researches*. It will be borne in mind that the learned and pious author considers those Christians as having settled in the East, within the first three centuries after Christ, before the corruptions of the Church of Rome had been introduced, and when the original simplicity of gospel order had been but in a small degree invaded. Separating from the Western church at that early period, and remaining for many centuries, almost wholly secluded from the rest of the world, they were found in a great measure free from the innovations and superstitions of the Papacy. Now, if ruling elders had any existence in the Christian church within the first three hundred years, as Ambrose expressly declares they had, we might expect to find the Syrian Christians, in their seclusion, retaining some traces at least of this office in their churches. Accordingly, Dr. Buchanan, in describing the circumstances of a visit which he paid one of the churches of this simple and highly interesting people, speaks as follows:— ‘When we arrived, I was received at the door of the church by three Kasheeshas, that is presbyters, or priests, who were

habited in like manner in white vestments. Their names were Jesu, Zecharias, and Urias, which they wrote down in my journal, each of them adding to his name the title Kashéesha. There were also present two Shumshanas, or deacons. The elder priest was a very intelligent man, of reverend appearance, having a long white beard, and of an affable and engaging deportment. The three principal Christians, or *lay-elders*, belonging to the church, were named Abraham, Thomas, and Alexandros.'” [Christian Researches in Asia, p. 75. N. Y. Edit. 12mo. 1812.]

Not only was the associated eldership which the apostles established in the churches, continued therein during some ages afterwards, but the churches retained and exercised the right to a voice in all matters of importance, whether relating to their temporal or spiritual concerns: — First, in *the election and removal of officers*.

“The earliest and most authentic authority on this subject, is derived from Clement of Rome, contemporary with some of the apostles. This venerable father, in his epistle to the church at Corinth, about A.D. 96, or, according to Bishop Wake, ‘between the 60th and 70th year of Christ,’ speaks of the regulations which were established by the apostles, for the appointment of others to succeed them after their decease. This appointment was to be made *with the consent and approbation of the whole church*, *συνεδοκασία της εκκλησίας πάσης*, grounded on their previous knowledge of the qualifications of the candidate for this office. This testimony clearly indicates the active co-operation of the church in the appointment of their ministers. It may have been the custom for the presbyters to propose one to supply any vacancy which occurred; but it remained with the church to ratify or to reject the nomination.’

“Tertullian, in his apology for Christians, against the heathen, A.D. 198 or 205, says that the elders came into their office *by the testimony of the people*, that is, by the suffrage or election of the people. Their free and independent suffrages were the highest testimony which the people could give of their approbation of their elders.

“The epistles of Ignatius, whether genuine or spurious, belong to the period of which we are now treating. This prelatial writer, accords to the church the right of electing their own delegates.

“Origen, in his last book against Celsus, about A.D. 240, speaks of the elders and rulers of the churches as *εκλεγόμενοι, chosen to their office*. In his sixth homily on Leviticus, he asserts that the presence of the people is required in the ordination of a priest; and the reason assigned for their intervention is to secure an impartial election, and the appointment to this office of one who might possess the highest qualifications for it. The whole passage implies the active co-operation of the people in the appointment of their ministers.

“Cyprian, A.D. 258, most fully accords to the people the right of suffrage in the appointment of their spiritual teachers, declaring that they have the fullest authority to choose those who are worthy of this office, and to refuse such as may be unworthy. This, according to this father, was an *apostolic usage*, preserved by a *divine* authority in his day, and observed throughout the churches of Africa (*apud nos*), that a pastor, *sacerdos*, should be chosen publicly, in the presence of the people; and that by their decision thus publicly expressed, the candidate should be adjudged worthy to fill the vacant office, whether of deacon, presbyter, or bishop. In accordance with these views, it was his custom, on all such occasions, to consult his clergy and the people before proceeding to ordain any one to the office of the ministry.

“So universal was the right of suffrage, and so reasonable, that it attracted the notice of the emperor, Alexander Severus, who reigned from A.D. 222 to 235. In imitation of the custom of the Christians and Jews, in the appointment of their priests, as he says, he gave the people the right of rejecting the appointment of any procurator, or chief president of the provinces whom he might nominate to such an office. Their votes, however, in these cases, were not merely testimonial, but really judicial and elective.

The authorities above cited indicate that the suffrages of the church were directed by a previous nomination of the clergy. But there are on record instances in which the people, of their own accord, and by acclamation, elected individuals to the office of bishop or presbyter, without any previous nomination. Ambrose, bishop of Milan, was elected in this manner, A.D. 374. Martin, of Tours, A.D. 375, was appointed in the same manner. So also were Eustathius at Antioch, A.D. 310, Chrysostom at Constantinople, A.D. 398, Erechius at Hippo, and Miletius at Antioch. It is also observable that these examples belong to a later age, the fourth century. They are therefore important evidence, that the people continued even at this late period to retain their rights in these popular elections.

“Daille sums up the evidence on this subject in the following terms: ‘It is clear that in the primitive times they [popular elections and ordinations] depended partly on the people, and not wholly on the clergy; but every company of the faithful either chose their own pastors, or else had leave to consider and approve of those that were proposed to them for that purpose. Pontius, a deacon of the church of Carthage, says that St. Cyprian, being yet a neophyte, was elected to the charge of pastor, and the degree of bishop by the judgement of God, and the favour of the people. St. Cyprian, also, tells us the same in several places. In his fifty-second epistle, speaking of Cornelius, he says, That he was made bishop of Rome by the judgement of God, and of his Christ, by the testimony of the greatest part of the clergy, by the suffrages of the people who were there present, and by the college of pastors or ancient bishops, all good and pious men.

“This right in question is clearly admitted even in the Roman pontifical, in which the bishop, at the ordination of a priest, is made to say, ‘It was not without good reason that the fathers had ordained that the advice of the people should be taken in the election of those persons who were to serve at the altar; to the end that having given their assent to their ordination they might the more readily yield

obedience to those who were so ordained.' This passage is cited by Daillé, who remarks, that an honest canon of Valentinus very gravely proposed to the Council of Trent, that this, and all such authorities, should be blotted out; so that no trace or footstep of them should remain in future for heretics to bring against them for having taken away this right.

"Bingham, and Chancellor King, and multitudes of the most respectable writers in the communion of the Episcopal church, fully sustain the foregoing representations of the right of suffrage as enjoyed by the primitive churches. They are clearly supported by the late Dr. Burton, and by Riddle, both of Oxford University, and by the best authorities both ancient and modern. 'The mode of appointing bishops and presbyters,' says Riddle, 'has been repeatedly changed. Election by the people, for instance, has been discontinued. This is indeed, in the estimation of Episcopalians, a great improvement, but still, as they must allow, it is a change.'

"For what term of time the several churches continued in the full enjoyment of the right of suffrage, we are not distinctly informed. We can only say with Mosheim, — 'This power of appointing their elders continued to be exercised by the members of the church at large as long as primitive manners were retained entire; and those who ruled over the churches did not conceive themselves at liberty to introduce any deviation from the apostolic model.' The reader will find an able discussion of this whole subject, also, and an extended collection of authorities in Blondell's treatise, *De Plebis in Electionibus jure*."

This right was exercised, secondly, *in the deposition* of officers.

"The people, down to the third or fourth century, retained, and not unfrequently exercised, the right of even deposing one from the ministry. The controversy of the people of Corinth with their pastors, as indicated in the epistle of Clement, has been already mentioned; and the case of Valens deposed from the ministry by the church at

Philippi. To these may be added the instances of **Martialis** and **Basilides**, bishops of Leon and Astorga in Spain, who were deposed by their people for idolatry. From this sentence of the people they appealed to several bishops in Africa. These, after hearing the case in common council, A.D. 258, affirmed the act of the people. The result of their deliberations was communicated by Cyprian, from which decision the extract below is taken, in which he fully accords to the people both the right to choose the worthy and to depose the unworthy. *Eligendi dignos sacerdotes et indignos recusandi.* ‘Many other such like passages,’ says King, ‘are found in that synodical epistle, which flatly asserts the people’s power to depose a wicked and scandalous bishop,’* and with him Bingham substantially agrees.† And again, by Dr. Barrow, of the Episcopal church. ‘In reason, the nature of any spiritual office consisting in instruction in truth, and guidance in virtue toward the attainment of salvation, if any man doth lead into pernicious error or impiety, he thereby ceaseth to be capable of such office; as a blind man, by being so, doth cease to be a guide. No man can be bound to follow any one into the ditch, or to obey any one in prejudice to his own salvation. If any pastor should teach bad doctrine, or prescribe bad practice, his people may reject and disobey him.’

“From these censures of a popular assembly an appeal would be made, as in the case before us, to a synodical council, or to the neighbouring bishops. For this reason, they are sometimes represented as the ecclesiastical court for the trial of the clergy. Such they were at a subsequent period; but in the primitive church it was, as appears from

* Prim. Chris., P. 1. c. 6. The following passage is an example of such an assertion. ‘Inde per temporum et successionum vices episcoporum ordinatio et ecclesiæ ratio decurrit ut ecclesia super episcopos constituatur et omnis actus ecclesiæ per eosdem præpositos gubernetur. Cum hoc itaque lege divina fundatum sit, miror quosdam, audaci temeritate, sic mihi scribere voluisse ut ecclesiæ nomine literas facerent, quando ecclesia in episcopo et clero et in omnibus stantibus [i.e. who had apostatized] sit constituta. — Ep. 33, al. 27.’

† Book 16, c. 1. Comp. Neander’s Allgem. Kirch. Gesch., 11, p. 341.”

the foregoing authorities, the right of the church to exercise her discipline over both laity and clergy."

Thirdly,—in the admission and removal of members. And this important point, in relation to which *the exclusive right and responsibility of the teaching ministry* has been so often and so strongly claimed, the following testimonies collected by Colman are decisive.

"Clemens Romanus, the only apostolical father belonging strictly to the first century, and contemporary with several of the apostles, throughout his epistle treats the Church of Corinth as the only court of censure. He addresses his epistle, A. D. 68, or 98, not to the bishop, but to the entire body of believers. This circumstance is worthy of particular notice, inasmuch as the epistle is written relative to a case of discipline, and not to enforce the practical duties of religion. The church at Corinth was recognized as having authority in the case under consideration. The epistle of Polycarp, also, treating on the same general subject, is addressed to the church at Philippi, recognizing in the same manner the right of the church to take cognizance of offences.

"The epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians, written, according to Bishop Wake, A. D. 116 or 117, affords us, indirectly, a similar example of the deportment of the church towards a fallen brother. This venerable father was greatly afflicted at the defection of Valens, a presbyter of that church, who had fallen into some scandalous offence. But he entreats the charitable consideration of the church towards the offender, urging them to exercise moderation towards him; and on similar occasions to seek to reclaim the erring, and to call them back, in the spirit of kindness and Christian charity. The address and exhortation, throughout, proceed on the supposition, that the duty of mutual watchfulness belongs to the brethren of the church collectively.

"Tertullian remarks, that the crimes of idolatry and of murder are of such enormity, that the charity of the *churches* is not extended to such as had been guilty of these *offences*.

“ We come next to Cyprian, who was contemporary with Tertullian, and died about forty years later. In considering the authority of Cyprian, let the reader also bear in mind the following remarks of Riddle relative to this celebrated father. ‘ In these writings of Cyprian, as well as in all his works, we are especially delighted with the sincere and primitive piety of the author ; while the chief subject of our regret and disapprobation are his mistaken views concerning the constitution of the church, and, especially his assertion of undue power and prerogative on behalf of Christian ministers ; — of such influence and authority as the apostles never sanctioned, and such as no pastors who have thoroughly imbibed the apostolic spirit would wish to exercise or possess.’ But notwithstanding this ‘ undue power and prerogative’ which Cyprian ascribes to Christian ministers, he uniformly recognizes, and most fully asserts, the right of the church to direct the discipline of its members. About the year 250, the emperor Decius issued an edict commanding the Christians to sacrifice to the gods. To escape the requisitions and penalties of this edict, Cyprian, then bishop of Carthage, was compelled to fly for his life, and continued in exile about sixteen months. But many of his church, under the relentless persecution that ensued, yielded an apparent compliance to the emperor’s impious command. Others, without compliance, had the address to obtain a certain certificate from the prosecuting officer which freed them from further molestation. All such persons, however, were denominated the lapsed, *lapsi*, and were excommunicated as apostates. The system of canonical penance, as it was called, at this time was so far established, that this class of offenders were required to fulfil the forms of a prescribed and a prolonged penance, before they could be restored to the communion of the church. Many of the lapsed, however, touched with a sense of their guilt, pleaded for an abatement of the rigour of these austerities, and an earlier and easier return to the communion of the church. To this course a party in the church were, for various reasons, strongly inclined ; and some were actually restored in

the absence of the bishop. This irregularity was often and severely censured by Cyprian, who, in his epistles and writings relative to the case of the lapsed, often recognizes the right of the people to be a party in the deliberations and decisions held, and to be held, respecting them. The clergy who had favoured this abuse, he says, 'shall give an account of what they have done, to himself, to the confessors, and to the whole church.'

"Again he says, in a letter addressed to the church, — 'When the Lord shall have restored peace unto us all, and we shall all have returned to the church again, we shall then examine all these things, *you also being present and judging of them.*' In the conclusion of the same epistle he adds, 'I desire then that they would patiently hear our counsel and wait for our return, that then, when many of us, bishops, shall have met together, we may examine the certificates and desires of the blessed martyrs, according to the discipline of the Lord, in the presence of the confessors, and according to your will.'

"Again, in his epistle to his people at Carthage, in which he bewails the schism of Felicissimus, he assures them that on his return, he with his colleagues, will dispose of the case *agreeably to the will of his people*, and the mutual council of both clergy and people.

"Origen, again, of Cæsarea in Palestine, speaks of the conviction of an offender before the whole church, *ἐπὶ πάσης τῆς ἐκκλησίας*, as the customary mode of trial. With that of Origen we may join the authority of Chrysostom at Constantinople. In commenting on 1 Cor. v. 3-5, he represents the complaint of the apostle to be that the Corinthians had not put away that wicked person from among them; 'showing that this ought to be done without their teacher,' and that the apostle associates them with him, 'that his own authority might not seem to be too great' in the transaction. Theodoret also expresses much the same sentiments upon the passage under consideration.

"The penitent was *restored* also, in the spirit of kindness and Christian forgiveness, by the joint consent of the

same body which had originally excluded him from their communion.

“This point deserves distinct consideration, as another indication of the religious liberty enjoyed by the church. Paul submitted to the church at Corinth the restoration of the offender whom they had excluded from his communion. Tertullian makes it the duty of the penitent to cast himself at the feet of the clergy, and kneeling at the altar of God, to seek the pardon and intercessions of all the brethren. Cyprian, in the passage cited above, declares, that the lapsed, who had been excluded from the church, must make their defence before all the people, *apud plebem universam*. ‘It was ordained by an African synod, in the third century, that, except in danger of death, or of a sudden persecution, none should be received unto the peace of the church, *without the knowledge and consent of the people*.’ Natalis, at Rome, in the first part of the third century, threw himself at the feet of the clergy and laity, and so bewailed his faults, that *the church was moved with compassion for him*, and with much difficulty he was received into their communion. The same is related of one of the bishops, who was restored to the church at Rome, under Cornelius, to lay-communion, ‘*through the mediation of all the people then present*.’ Serapian, at Antioch, again, was refused admission to that church, nobody *giving attention to him*. At Rome, then, in Africa, in Asia, and universally, the penitent was restored to Christian communion, by the authority of the church from which he had been expelled.”

“Valesius, therefore, the learned commentator on Eusebius, says that ‘the peoples’ suffrages were required when any one was to be received into the church, who for any fault had been excommunicated.’ This is said in relation to the usage of the church in the third century.

“The authority of Du Pin, the distinguished historian of the Roman Catholic communion, whose opinion is worthy of all confidence, is to the same effect; that the discipline of the church continued, in the third century, to be administered by the church as it had been from the beginning.

“Mosheim is full and explicit on the same point. He not only ascribes to the church the power of enacting their own laws and choosing their own officers, but of excluding and receiving such as were the subjects of discipline, *malos et degeneros et excludendi et recipiendi*, and adds that nothing of any moment was transacted or decided without their knowledge and consent.

“The views of Neander again are sufficiently apparent. More thoroughly conversant with the writings of the fathers, and more profoundly skilled in the government and history of the church than any man living, he not only ascribes the discipline of offenders originally to the deliberation and action of the church, but states, moreover, that this right was retained by the laity in the middle of the third century, after the rise of the episcopal power, and the consequent change in the government of the church. ‘The participation of the laity in the concerns of the church was not yet altogether excluded. One of these concerns was the restoration of the lapsed to the communion of the church. The examination which was instituted in connexion with this restoration was also held before the whole church.

“These authorities might be extended almost indefinitely; but enough have been cited to show that, in the opinion of those who are most competent to decide, the sacred right of directing the discipline of the church was, from the beginning, exercised by the whole body of believers belonging to the community; and that they continued, in the third century, in the exercise of the same prerogative.”

“Even the minute concerns of the church were submitted to the direction of the popular voice. Is a delegate to be sent out? he goes, not as the servant of the bishop, but as the representative of the church, chosen to this service by public vote.* Is a letter missive to be issued from one church to another? it is done in the name of the church; and, when received, is publicly read.† In short, nothing

“* Ignatius, ad. Phil., c. 10.”

“† The letters of Clement and Polycarp were written by the authority

is done without the consent of the church. Even Cyprian, the great advocate of Episcopal precedence in the middle of the third century, protests to his clergy, that, 'from his first coming to his bishopric, he had ever resolved to do nothing according to his own private will, without the advice of the clergy and the approbation of the people.' " †

Mosheim therefore testifies, that "with them resided the power of enacting laws, as also of adopting or rejecting whatever might be proposed in the general assemblies, and of expelling and again receiving into communion any deprivileged or unworthy members. In a word, nothing whatever, of any moment, could be determined on, or carried into effect, without their knowledge and concurrence."

"On this point we must be permitted again to adduce the authority of Neander. After showing at length, that, agreeably to the spirit of the primitive church, all were regarded as different organs and members of one body, and actuated by one and the same spirit, he adds, 'But from the nature of the religious life and of the Christian church, it is hardly possible to draw the inference naturally that the government should have been entrusted to the hands of a single one. *The monarchical form of government accords not with the spirit of the Christian church.*'

"Riddle gives the following sketch of the constitution and government of the church at the beginning of the second century. 'The subordinate government, &c., of each particular church was vested in itself; that is to say, the whole body elected its minister and officers, and was consulted on

of the churches respectively. Comp. Euseb., *Ecc. Hist.*, 4, c. 15, 5. c. 1, and c. 24. With the epistle of Clement, five delegates were sent also from the church at Rome, to that of Corinth, to attempt to reconcile the dissensions in that church. § 59."

" † Ad id vero quod scripserunt mihi compresbyteri nostri, Donatus et Fortunatus, Novatus et Gordius, solus rescribere nihil potui; quando a primordio episcopatus mei statuerim nihil sine consilio vestro, et sine consensu plebis meæ privatim sententia gerere; sed cum ad vos per Dei gratiam venero, tunc de eis quæ vel gesta sunt, vel gerenda sicut honor mutuus poscit in commune tractabimus. — *Cyprian Ep.* 5. Comp. *Ep.* 3, 65. *Daille on the Fathers*, p. 350. London."

all matters of importance.' This is said of the church at the close of the first century.

"Even the 'judicious' Hooker, the great expounder of the ecclesiastical polity of the Episcopal church, distinctly declares, that 'the general consent of all' is requisite for the ratification of the laws of the church. 'Laws could they never be, without the consent of the whole church to be guided by them; whereunto both nature, and the practice of the church of God set down in Scripture, is found so consonant, that God himself would not impose his own laws upon his people by the hands of Moses without their free and open consent.'"

"There is the fullest evidence that the sanction of the laity was requisite, as late as the middle of the third century, in all disciplinary proceedings of the church. By the beginning of the fourth, however, this cardinal right, through the operation of causes, which have been briefly mentioned and which may be more fully specified hereafter, was greatly abridged, and shortly became wholly lost. This fact strongly illustrates the progress of the Episcopal hierarchy. While the right of the laity is yet undisputed, the power of the bishop begins at first to be partially asserted, and occasionally admitted; the people occupying a neutral position between submission and open hostility. But, from disuse to denial, and from denial to the extinction of neglected privileges and powers, the descent is natural, short and rapid. From about the middle of the fourth century, accordingly, the bishops assumed the control of the whole penal jurisdiction of the laity, opening and shutting at pleasure the doors of the church, inflicting sentence of excommunication, and prescribing, at their discretion, the austerities of penance; and again absolving the penitents, and restoring them to the church by their own arbitrary power. The people, accordingly, no longer having any part in the trial of offences, ceased to watch for the purity of the church, connived at offences, and concealed the offender; not caring to interfere with the prerogatives of the bishop, in which they had no further interest. The speedy and sad

corruption of the church was but the natural consequence of this loose and arbitrary discipline. Nor can it be doubted, that this was the efficient cause of that degeneracy which succeeded.

“The bishops rose in rank and power, as we have seen, not by any sudden and violent assumption of diocesan authority, but by the silent concession and approbation, at first, of the people. Their authority and influence was, as yet, only that which is conceded to talent and piety in official stations, employed and exerted for the general good. ‘So that the growth of Episcopal power is not altogether attributable to ambitious designs on the part of those by whom it was first exercised. So far from this, the effect, as Dr. Campbell has remarked, ‘is much more justly ascribed to their virtues.’ How paradoxical soever this may sound, it is difficult to account in any other way for the unopposed ascendancy which was so soon obtained by men, whose ambition, had it betrayed itself when as yet unarmed by wealth or power, required but to be withstood, in order to be rendered harmless. That deference was, however, lavishly conceded to personal character, from a principle of veneration and unbounded confidence, which it would have been next to impossible openly to wrest from people roused to a jealous sense of their right.’ Their influence was analogous to that of a modern missionary over the churches which he has gathered about him in different stations; or it resembles that which the apostles and first preachers exercised over the churches which were planted by them. It is only to be regretted, that these bishops, in claiming to be the successors of the apostles, in office and in power, had not also enough of the spirit of their reputed predecessors, to employ the high trust which was committed unto them only for the interest of the churches under their care; and then to resign it again for the same great end, instead of perverting the sacred privileges of their office into the means of gratifying unholy ambition in the extension of the Episcopal prerogative.”

Lord King thus states the result of his able and learned

“Enquiry into the constitution &c., of the Christian church:”—“I find that, in general, all things relating to the government and policy of the church, were performed by the joint consent and administration of the clergy and laity; the people were to do nothing without the bishop. And on the contrary, he did nothing without the knowledge and consent of his people. When any letters came from foreign churches, they were received, and read before the whole church, and the whole church agreed upon common letters to be sent to other churches. And so for all other matters relating to the policy of the church, they were managed by the common advice and counsel of the clergy and laity, both concurred to the discharge of these actions.

“From this different attribution of the power of the keys, we may infer this, that it was so lodged both in bishops and people, as that each had some share in it: the bishop had the whole executive, and part of the legislative power; and the people had part in the legislative though not in the executive. As for the executive power, by which I understand the formal pronouncement of suspensions and excommunications, the imposition of hands in the absolution of penitents, and such like; that could be done by none, but by the bishop or by persons in holy orders, deputed and commissioned by him, as the sequel will evince. But as for the legislative, decretive, or judicatorial power, that appertained both to clergy and laity, who conjunctly made up that supreme consistorial court, which was in every parish, before which all offenders were tried; and if found guilty, sentenced, and condemned.”

The association of the churches with their governors, the existence and long continuance of which is thus fully proved, *existed in those synods or councils* which were very early convened for the purposes of mutual counsel and action, both for the suppression of error and the preservation of purity and peace in the churches belonging to a particular locality or district.—The following statements by Dr. Candlish trace with satisfactory precision the origin of these assemblies, and at the same time dilate the views to that universa-

lity of association and intercourse, to which the catholic spirit of Christianity so clearly points, and to which, wherever cherished, it so powerfully disposes.

“The principle which developed itself in the early church, and which is, at least by implication and in embryo, contained in the New Testament, is substantially that of self-government; fitted to give the church the aspect of a number of free and separate commonwealths, rather than that of one single, vast, and gigantic empire. It must be added, however, to complete this view of Christianity, as it started on its earthly career, that it evidently pointed not only to a close and frequent interchange of good offices among these spiritual commonwealths or republics, but to the exercise of much mutual deference, in the way of constantly consulting one another, referring difficult points of doctrine and duty for grave deliberation and advice, and rendering cheerful and unconstrained respect to the voice of council or admonition that might issue from meetings, or convocations of venerable fathers and elders, possessing the general confidence of God’s people, and giving evidence of being directed by his good Spirit. The apostolic journeys so manifold, and often so perilous,—the messages sent by trustworthy ambassadors from church to church, conveying substantial proofs of brotherly love,—and the case or cases of conscience, sent up from the provinces, and submitted to the apostles and brethren at Jerusalem, the most influential general council to which appeal could be made; all these precedents, without pressing them too far, or regarding them as binding in the letter, make out, at least the general principle of a sort of federal union of kindness and consultation, among the independent Christian communities of different cities and countries throughout the world.

“Now, let primitive Christianity, with a constitution thus elastic yet cohering, be viewed as making way among the nations. Congregations springing up in large towns; and as these multiply and spread their branches into the surrounding neighbourhoods they form themselves into *societies*, under their pastors and elders, consulting and

acting together, in consistories, or colleges, or presbyteries, or synods. Gradually and insensibly, territorial boundaries, or arrangements of civil governments, mould into shape and form the larger sections with which these smaller bodies combine; union, not isolation, being the law and tendency of the gospel; and Christian communities are found to become provincial and national. Considerable diversities, it is not improbable, may be allowed to prevail, even within these united brotherhoods; and between one of them and another, still greater dissimilarity may exist. The general rule of decency and order, and the precept of mutual forbearance and tenderness towards weaker brethren, being observed in all, and rites and ceremonies of human appointment, with whatsoever, in the worship and discipline of the church, has not the warrant of the word of God, being repudiated and disowned, there will still be room for shades of peculiarity, occasioned by climate, customs, or circumstances. Instead of the dead flat level of insipid and enforced uniformity, not a little variety of undulating surface and tints of diverse colours may gratify the liberty-loving eye. But no inconvenience need arise from this, nor any breach of real unity. The disregarding of all forms, ceremonies and observances, and indeed, all works of every kind, from having any place at all, or any thing whatsoever to do, in the sinner's justification before God, and the unanimous consent to receive that great boon, as dispensed through the righteousness and blood of his own Son, and appropriated by that faith which his own Spirit works in the heart, the loyalty and allegiance exclusively rendered to the divine word, apart from all authority and tradition of man, — the direct access to God assured to every believer in Jesus without the intervention of any priesthood, — the liberty of adoption which the sacraments only outwardly, but the Holy Ghost inwardly seals, — and the glowing love, not of a doubtful and contingent, but of a present and full reconciliation, — all these elements of harmony may preserve unbroken, amid many differences of detail, the peace of congregations and communities; and

when to all this, we add the influence of these lesser and larger bodies on one another, through a reciprocity of cordial and kindly attention, and the weight of well-timed and well-considered decisions, given forth on critical questions, from quarters universally deemed at least in a moral sense, authoritative, — as from arbiters or umpires or assemblies, generally called and trusted, — we may form to ourselves the conception of the universal Christian church, minutely subdivided, as is the surface of this terraqueous globe, and in its minutest subdivisions, free and self-regulating; yet presenting, as a whole, the aspect of one great republic of letters and religion, with common counsels and a common spirit, and capable of many a combined effort, for mutual comfort, improvement and defence, as well as for reclaiming the waste places of the earth and invading the territories still unsubdued.”

“That the earlier synods or councils held in the Christian churches were not composed of teaching ministers exclusively, nor yet of other standing officers in connexion with them, but that other members of the churches had a place in those assemblies, is a fact fully established by Lord King in the following passage.

“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 that 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 of 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

* * King’s Enquiry. Chap. viii. sec. 5. † Euseb. b. vii. c. 30.

then there should 'be convened a synod of bishops, and of the laity who had stood firm during the persecution, to consult 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;' as also did the whole body of the clergy of the church of Rome, who were willing that the affair 'of the lapsed should be determined by the common counsel of the bishops, presbyters, deacons, confessors, and the standing laity.' And thus, at that great council held at Carthage, anno 258, there were present eighty-seven 'bishops, together with presbyters, deacons, and a great part of the laity.' "

Mosheim states concerning the bishops, that, "At their first appearance in the general councils, they acknowledged that they were no more than the delegates of their respective churches, and that they acted in the name and by the appointment of their people. But they soon changed this humble tone, imperceptibly extended the limits of their authority, turned their influence into dominion, and their counsels into laws; and openly asserted, at length, that Christ had empowered them to prescribe to his people *authoritative rules of faith and manners.*"* And Baxter thus states one of the conclusions to which his ecclesiastical researches had led — that the great inlet to all the corruptions that disgraced the Christian name for so many ages, was, "the bishops increased their power: by degrees shut out the people from their share in the management of church affairs: erected courts and held synods where none but bishops were present: until, having got the whole of the government into their own hands, they ruled in a manner shocking to the recollection of every mind duly informed as to the things of God." — This subversion of the liberties of the churches, however, was not effected till some time after the alliance of the church with the state, under Constantine: an alliance, which, by rendering the

* Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, v. 1, pp. 178, 179.

† Euseb. b. v. c. 16. || Epis. xiv. § 2."

ministry less dependent on the churches, gave the fuller scope to that love of pre-eminence which is so natural to man, and which, as has been previously shown, even in the days and under the eyes of apostles, produced the bitterest fruits in the churches they had planted.

During the dark and dreary night which declining spirituality and increasing worldliness introduced, — and amidst the usurpations and oppressions, — the grinding tyranny — the horrifying tortures — and the bloody massacres that followed, and which identified popery with whatever is corrupt in principle and atrocious in conduct, — the love of Christian liberty, together with the love of doctrinal truth and zeal for the honour of Christ, continued to glow in some hearts, and produced — at intervals more or less remote, and on a wider or more limited scale — efforts to restore to the enslaved churches both the purity of their faith and the exercise of their liberties. And it is a fact which, while it evinces the importance of the subject, must be gratifying to every enlightened friend of the Methodist New Connexion, — that the great principle for which its founders so strenuously and so successfully contended, and by which the community is still distinguished, was interwoven into the polity of almost all the communities that separated from the papal hierarchy, and is still preserved in them.

Already have we seen that this principle exists in a church which has never bowed its neck to the papal yoke, — the Syrian church in Malabar. Supposed to have settled there within the first three centuries, when discovered by the Europeans who first sailed round the Cape of Good Hope, it was found to be in utter ignorance even of the existence of the pope; and it has resisted every subsequent effort to bring it into subjection either to Popery or to British Episcopalianism. A branch of this church, when visited by Dr. Buchanan, had, as its office-bearers, three presbyters or priests, two deacons, and *three lay elders*.

A similar association existed in the churches of the *Vaudois*, and in their various offshoots, the Waldenses, and

the Albigenses of France and Italy, the Mennonites of Holland, and the United Brethren of Bohemia. It is indeed probable that the Vaudean churches may be considered rather as *the retainers* of the apostolical faith and ecclesiastical order than as *reformed* from the corruptions of papacy. They therefore stated to the first Reformers that a tradition had been handed down to them from their forefathers, "that they had existed from the time of the apostles." Their enemies have been unable to give any satisfactory account of their origin; while one of the bitterest of them, Reinerius Sacco, an inquisitor who lived in an early part of the thirteenth century, gives the following striking testimony.

"Concerning the sects of ancient heretics, observe, that there have been more than seventy: all of which, except the sects of the Manicheans and the Arians and the Runcharians and the Leonists which have infected Germany, have through the favour of God, been destroyed. Among all these sects, which either still exist or which have formerly existed, there is not one more pernicious to the church than that of the Leonists: and this, for three reasons. The first reason is; because it has been of longer continuance: for some say, that it has lasted from the time of Sylvester; others, from the time of the apostles. The second reason is; because it is more general; for there is scarcely any land in which this exists not. The third reason is; because, while all other sects, through the immanity of their blasphemies against God, strike horror into the hearers, this of the Leonists has a great semblance of piety; inasmuch as they live justly before men, and believe, together with all the articles contained in the creed, every point well respecting the Deity: only they blaspheme the Roman church and clergy; to which the multitude of the laity are ready enough to give credence."

One of their own historians also testifies, "It would not be difficult to prove, that this poor band of the faithful were in the valleys of Piedmont more than four centuries before the appearance of those extraordinary personages, Luther, and Calvin, and the subsequent lights of the Reformation."

Neither has their church been ever reformed : whence arises its title of **EVANGELIC**. The Vaudois are, in fact, descended from the refugees from Italy ; who, after St. Paul had there preached the gospel, abandoned their beautiful country and fled, like the woman mentioned in the Apocalypse, to these wild mountains, where they have, to this day, handed down the gospel, from father to son, in the same purity and simplicity as it was preached by St. Paul.*

Blair in his history of the Waldenses, says, — “ They did not distinguish the teaching presbyter from the bishop. They had indeed three orders of men above their ordinary members, — the bishop or teaching elder, the *lay-elder*, and the deacon.” The existence of the second class is clearly referred to in the fourth article of “ The ancient discipline of the evangelical churches of the Valley of Piedmont,” and which is thus expressed : — “ Rulers and elders are chosen out of the people, according to the diversity of the work, in the unity of Christ.”

“ John Paul Perrin, the well known historian of the Waldenses, and who was himself one of the ministers of that people, in a number of places recognizes the office of elder, distinguished from that of pastor, or teacher, as retained in their churches. He expressly and repeatedly represents their synods as composed of ministers and elders. The same writer tells us, that in the year 1476, the Hussites, being engaged in separating and reforming their churches from the church of Rome, understood that there were some churches of the ancient Waldenses in Austria, in which the purity of the gospel was retained, and in which there were many eminent pastors. In order to ascertain the truth of this account, they (the Hussites) sent two of their ministers, with two elders, to inquire and ascertain what those flocks or congregations were.†

“ The same historian, in the same work, speaks of the

* Henry Arnold.

† History of the Old Waldenses, part ii., book 1, chap. 10 ; book 2, chap. 4 ; book 5, chap. 7.”

ministers and elders of the Bohemian churches.* Now the Bohemian Brethren, it is well known, were a branch of the same people called Waldenses.† They had removed from Picardy, in the north of France, about two hundred years before the time of Huss and Jerome, to Bohemia, and there, in conjunction with many natives of the country, whom they brought over to their opinions, established a number of pure churches, which long maintained the simplicity of the gospel. The undoubted existence of *ruling elders*, then, among the Bohemian Brethren, affords in itself, strong presumptive proof that the same class of officers existed in other branches of the same body. And, accordingly, a synod, of which we have an account, as held in Piedmont in Italy, in 1570, is represented repeatedly as made up of ‘pastors and elders.’ Again, in the form of government of the same people, in the chapter on excommunication, we find the following direction respecting the disorderly, who refuse to listen to private admonition:—‘Tell it to the church;’ that is, to the ‘guides, whereby the church is ruled;’ and that we may be at no loss who these ‘rulers’ were, we are told in a preceding chapter that they were elders chosen from among the people for the purpose of governing; and informed that they were distinct from the pastors.

“The testimony of Perrin and others, is supported by that of M. Gillis, another historian of the Waldenses. And also one of their pastors. In the confession of faith of that people, inserted at length in the ‘Addition’ to this work, and stated by the historian to have been the confession of the ancient, as well as of the modern Waldenses, it is declared, (p. 490 — art. 31,) that ‘it is necessary for the church to have pastors, to preach God’s word, to administer the sacraments, and to watch over the sheep of Jesus Christ; and also *elders and deacons*, according to the rules of good

“ * Part ii. book 2, chapters 9, 10.”

“ † History of the Waldenses, 4to., 1655, published by order of Cromwell.”

and holy church discipline, and the practice of the primitive church.'

"Sir Samuel Moreland, who visited the Waldenses in the year 1656, and took unwearied pains to learn from themselves their history, as well as their doctrine and order; informs us, that besides their synodical meetings, which took place once a year, when all candidates for the pastoral office were commonly ordained, they had also consistories in their respective churches, by means of which pure discipline was constantly maintained.*

"Accordingly, the Rev. Dr. Ranken, in his laboriously learned History of France, gives the following account of the Waldenses and Albigenses, whom he very properly represents as the same people. 'Their government and discipline were extremely simple. The youth intended for the ministry among them, were placed under the inspection of some of the elder barbes, or pastors, who trained them chiefly to the knowledge of the scriptures; and when satisfied of their proficiency, they received them as preachers, with imposition of hands. Their pastors were maintained by the voluntary offerings of the people. The whole church assembled once a year, to treat of their general affairs. Contributions were then obtained; and the common fund was divided, for the year, among not only the fixed pastors, but such as were itinerant, and had no particular district or charge. If any of them had fallen into scandal or sin, they were prohibited from preaching, and thrown out of the society. *The pastors were assisted in their inspection of the people's morals, by elders, whom probably both pastors and people elected, and set apart for that purpose.*' †

"Further; not only does Perrin speak of the ministers and elders of the Bohemian churches, thereby plainly intimating that they had a class of elders distinct from their pastors, or preachers; but the same thing is placed beyond the possibility of doubt or question by the Bohemian Bre-

"* History of the Evangelical Churches at Piedmont, book i. chapter viii."

"† History of France, vol. iii pp. 203, 204."

thren themselves, who, in the year 1535, presented a Confession of their Faith to Ferdinand, king of Hungary and Bohemia, with a friendly and highly commendatory preface by Luther; and who, a number of years afterwards, published their 'Plan of Government and Discipline,' which contains the following paragraph:—

“ ‘ Elders (*Presbyteri, seu Censores morum*) are honest, grave, pious men, chosen out of the whole congregation, that they may act as guardians of all the rest. To them authority is given, (either alone or in connexion with the pastor,) to admonish and rebuke those who transgress the prescribed rules, also to reconcile those who are at variance, and to restore to order whatever irregularity they may have noticed. Likewise in secular matters, relating to domestic concerns, the younger men and youths are in the habit of asking their counsel, and of being faithfully advised by them. From the example and practice of the ancient church, we believe that this ought always to be done; see Exodus xviii. 21. — Duteronomy i. 13. — 1 Cor. vi. 2, 4, 5. — 1 Tim. v. 17.’ ”

“ This they say, at the close, ‘ is the ecclesiastical order which they and their forefathers had had established among them for two hundred years: which they derived from the word of God; which they maintained through much persecution, and with much patience, and which they had observed with much happy fruit to themselves, and to the people of God.’ ”

In the ecclesiastical polity thus preserved by the maligned and persecuted Vaudois, and the scattered churches to which they had given birth, the Reformers saw a general platform which commended itself to their judgements, as combining both the chief principles and the machinery of government exhibited in the New Testament; and which they therefore adopted, in proportion as they were left free to follow their own convictions.

Of the *English Reformers*, Baxter, in his Treatise on Episcopacy, says, “ Archbishop Cranmer, with the rest of the commissioners, appointed by King Edward VI. for the

reformation of Ecclesiastical laws, decreed the administering discipline in every parish church by the minister and certain elders. Labouring and intending by all means to bring in the ancient discipline."

This testimony is supported by the celebrated Reformer, Alasco, who " was invited to England, by King Edward VI., at the instance of Archbishop Cranmer. He accepted the invitation, and was chosen superintendent of the German, French, and Italian congregations erected in London, which are said to have consisted in the aggregate, of more than three thousand souls. He afterwards published an account of the form of government and worship adopted in these congregations. The affairs of each, it is distinctly stated in that account, were managed by a pastor, ruling elders, and deacons, and each of these classes of officers was considered as of divine appointment. We also learn from his statement, that the ruling elders and deacons of those churches, as well as the pastors were ordained by the imposition of hands. The following remarks by Alasco himself, will serve at once to explain the design of the king in granting his royal sanction to these people, and also his own view of the principles upon which he and his brethren acted in founding the churches in question.

" When I was called by the king, and when certain laws of the country stood in the way, so that the public rites of divine worship used under the Papacy could not be immediately purged out, (which the king himself greatly desired,) and when I was anxious and earnest in my solicitations for the foreign churches, it was at length his pleasure that the public rites of the English churches should be reformed by degrees, as far as could be accomplished by the laws of the country; but that strangers who were not strictly and to the same extent bound by these laws, should have churches granted to them, in which they should freely regulate all things, wholly according to apostolical doctrine and practice, without any regard to the rites of the country; that by this means the English churches also might be excited to embrace apostolical purity, by the unanimous consent of all the estates

of the kingdom. Of this project, the king himself, from his great piety, was both the chief author and the defender. For although it was almost universally acceptable to the king's council, and the Archbishop of Canterbury promoted it with all his might, there were not wanting some who took it ill, and would have opposed it, had not his majesty checked them by his authority, and by the reasons which he adduced in favour of the design.' Again, in the appendix to the same book, p. 649, he says:—'The care of our church was committed to us chiefly with this view, that in the ministration thereof we should follow the rules of the divine word, and apostolic observance, rather than any rites of other churches. In fine, we were admonished both by the king himself, and his chief nobility, to this great liberty granted to us in our ministry rightly and faithfully; not to please men, but for the glory of God, by promoting the reformation of his worship.'"

Bishop Burnet says, "There were many learned and pious divines in the beginning of Queen Elizabeth's reign, who, being driven beyond sea, had observed the new model set up in Geneva and other places for the censuring of scandalous persons, of mixed judicatories of the ministers and laity, (called by the bishop, a little before, elders,) and these reflecting on the great looseness of life which had been universally complained of in King Edward's time, thought such a platform might be an effectual way for keeping out a return of like disorders.' The bishop tells us also the reason which induced Elizabeth not to adopt this: 'Lord Burleigh, and others, demonstrated to her, that these new models would certainly bring with them a great abatement of her prerogative; since, if the concerns of religion came into popular hands, there would be a power set up distinct from hers, over which she could have no authority. This she perceived well, and therefore resolved to maintain the ancient government of the church.'"

Lay-influence is, however, paramount in the Establishment, though it is of such a character, and is exerted through such channels, as to render the exercise of scriptural

discipline an absolute impossibility. "According to the theory of the Church, every parish is committed to the government of the Minister, with the assistance of the Churchwardens, (generally two,) who are chosen annually in Easter-week, from the body of the parishoners, and who are the guardians of public morals and ecclesiastical discipline within their precincts. These lay-officers of the Church are bound by their oath to return the names of all loose and scandalous livers into the ecclesiastical court of the diocese, at least once a year; and they may present at any other time for gross crimes. And if the Churchwardens neglect their duty, and no voluntary promoter appears, the one-hundred-and-thirteenth canon then empowers the Minister to take the business of prosecuting offenders into his own hands. If the party accused be convicted of the crime upon the testimony of at least two witnesses, before the judge of the ecclesiastical court, he may be excommunicated, and not admitted to the sacrament or any communion in divine offices, and be condemned in the costs of the suit.' There is also what is termed the Greater Excommunication, whereby the offender is cut off from all commerce with Christians, even in temporal affairs. This must be pronounced by the Bishop; and if the excommunicated person persist, for forty days, in contumacious disobedience, he may be committed to prison by virtue of the writ *de excommunicato capiendo*, to lie there till he shall have made satisfaction to the Church. But, if the judge of any spiritual court excommunicate a man for a cause of which he has not legal cognizance, the party may have an action against him at common law, and he is also liable to be indicted at the suit of the King.*

"The King also 'hath the same power that the religious kings of Judah had; the same which the great Constantine, and the succeeding emperors, for many ages enjoyed; the same power which the ancient kings of this nation exercised — viz., a power to convene his clergy, and advise with them

* See Adams' Religious Word Displayed. Vol. 1, pp. 412, 413.

about affairs of the church ; a power to ratify that which the bishops and clergy agree upon, and give it the force of law ; a power to choose fit persons to govern the church ; a power to correct all offenders against faith or manners, be they clergy or laymen ; and, finally, a power to determine all causes and controversies, ecclesiastical and civil, among his own subjects (by the advice of fit counsellors,) so as there lies no appeal from his determination : and this is what we mean when we call him Supreme Governor of this church, which our king must needs be, or else he cannot keep his kingdom in peace.' ”

In *the Lutheran churches*, lay-influence still exists similar in its extent, and, unhappily, too similar in its character and results.

“ According to the representation of Mosheim, the internal government of the Lutheran churches recedes equally upon Episcopacy on the one hand, and from Presbyterianism on the other, its distinguishing feature consisting in its direct subordination to the civil government. The supreme direction of ecclesiastical affairs is vested in councils or boards, appointed by the sovereign, and termed consistories, which are composed of a number of clergymen and *several of the laity*, including persons conversant with both civil and ecclesiastical law. It is the complaint of Mosheim that the counsels of certain persons in power prevailed in the Lutheran church, who considered the privilege of excommunication in the hands of the clergy as derogatory to the majesty of the sovereign, and detrimental to the interests of civil society ; and that, as the consequence of this branch of spiritual jurisdiction falling into disrepute, the Lutheran Church is deprived of almost all authority and discipline.”

The other great branch of the Reformation, *the Presbyterian*, keeping more closely to the pattern presented in the New Testament as exemplified in the Waldensian and Bohemian churches, adopted that form from which the external framework of the Methodist polity was taken, but without that association of the churches with the ministry, which formed, and still forms, so vital a part of Presbyterian

government, and which is so fully interwoven into the entire system of the New Connexion. — The following brief sketch of the constitution of the church of Scotland, will furnish a correct general representation of the Presbyterian polity.

“ In the Church of Scotland, the administration of ecclesiastical discipline devolves upon the Kirk Sessions ; and the popular constitution of those courts, as well as their subordination to the control of the higher judicatories, affords a security against oppression. In this church, every regulation of public worship, every act of discipline, and every ecclesiastical censure, which, in Episcopal churches, emanate from the authority of a diocesan, or from a convocation of clergy, are the joint acts of a certain number of ministers and laymen acting together with equal authority, and deciding every question by a majority of voices. The laymen, who form an essential part of the ecclesiastical courts of Scotland, are called elders, and ruling elders ; they are chosen from among the heads of families of reputed orthodoxy and piety, and are solemnly ordained to their office. The number of elders is proportioned to the extent and population of the parish, varying from two or three, to twelve, twenty, thirty, and even fifty. Their office resembles in some respects that of the churchwardens in the Church of England ; but their jurisdiction is of a more religious character. They assist at the dispensation of the sacraments, and in administering relief to the poor, and are bearers of religious advice and comfort among the parishioners. They correspond less to *ecclesie guardiani* (the legal definition of churchwardens), than to *diaconi* or deacons, as that order subsisted in ancient times. Of these elders, with the minister as moderator, the Kirk sessions consists ; which has the power of admitting persons to the privilege of membership, and of suspending offenders from the Lord's table. From this session, an appeal lies to the presbytery, which answers to the consistory of the Lutheran churches, and consists of all the pastors within a certain district, and one ruling elder chosen from each parish. To *this judicatory* belong the excommunication, admission,

and censuring of ministers, the licensing of probationers, the deciding upon references and appeals from kirk sessions, the directing of the sentence of excommunication against contumacious offenders, the cognizance or rebuke of any heresy or erroneous doctrine, and generally, the regulation of all matters concerning the several churches within its jurisdiction. From the judgement and authority of the Presbytery there lies an appeal to the Provincial Synod, which ordinarily meets twice in the year, and comprises all the presbyteries within the province. The highest ecclesiastical court, to which lies the ultimate appeal, is the national synod, styled the General Assembly, composed of a certain number of ministers and ruling elders delegated from each presbytery, and of commissioners from the royal boroughs. The elders deputed to this counsel are seldom the lay-elders of the respective parishes, but frequently gentlemen of the legal profession, and persons eminent for rank or talent; but they must have acted at least once as elders within the presbytery which they represent, and have subscribed to the National Confession. The Assembly chooses its own moderator or president, who is always a minister; but the Crown is represented in the person of the Lord High Commissioner, who is always a nobleman, and is the real president of the Assembly, although he has no vote. In questions purely religious, no appeal lies from this court, which is at once a legislature and a judicatory. But it is invested with no such temporal authority over property and persons as appertains to the ecclesiastical courts of England. It can enforce its spiritual decisions by no such formidable sanctions; it can neither amerce by fines, nor by its writs incarcerate the offender."

This system, in all its liberal elements and associations, — but separated from state control and the forcible obtrusion of ministers on the churches by lay-patrons, — is received not only by the *Free Church of Scotland*, but by the *other communities* which had previously seceded from the Establishment there. It was adopted by the *Presbyterian Churches in England*; and its lay-eldership, as the following

circumstances evince, was established among *the Puritan Congregationalists*, both in *England* and *America*.

Neal, in his "History of the Puritans," states that, "To inform the world of the real principles of the Puritans, Mr. Bradshaw published a treatise, entitled, 'English Puritanism,' &c., which the learned Dr. Ames translated into Latin for the benefit of foreigners." The opening of the fourth chapter, which is "Concerning the Elders," presents these statements :

"Forasmuch as, through the malice of Satan, there are, and will be, in the best churches, many disorders and scandals committed that redound to the reproach of the Gospel, and are a stumbling block to many both without and within the church, and since they judge it repugnant to the word of God that any minister should be a sole ruler, and, as it were, a pope, so much as in one parish, much more that he should be one over a whole diocese, province, or nation, they hold, that by God's ordinance, the congregation should make choice of other officers, as assistants unto the ministers in the spiritual regiment of the congregation, who are by office, jointly with the ministers of the word, to be as monitors and overseers of the manners and conversation of all the congregation, and one of another, that so every one may be more wary of his ways, and that the pastors and doctors may better attend to prayer and doctrine, and by their means may be made better acquainted with the state of the people, when other eyes beside their own shall wake and watch over them."

A similar state of things existed in America. "The earlier Independents of New England were English Puritans, who sought refuge on a foreign soil from the convulsions and persecutions of their native country. For a considerable period, the only work on church government at all acknowledged by them, as an exposition of their polity, was John Cotton's well known 'Book of the Keys.' This author assigns the government of the church to elders, while he concedes certain privileges to the brethren or *private members*; and he also asserts 'the necessary commu-

nion of churches in synods,' in order to rectify mal-administration. 'But it was convenient, (says Mr. C. Mather,) the churches of New England should have a system of their discipline extracted from the Word of God, and exhibited to them with a more effectual, acknowledged, and established recommendation.' With this view, a bill was presented to the 'general court,' in the year 1646, for the calling of a synod, to prepare a directory of government.

"The synod met at Cambridge, (New England,) and produced the famous 'Cambridge Platform of Church Discipline.' The Platform was presented by the synod to the general court which convened it, in 1648; and more than thirty years afterwards, it was unanimously approved of by a synod of all the churches in the colony, assembled at Boston. Its seventh chapter treats of ruling elders and deacons. 'The ruling elder's office,' we are there told, 'is distinct from the office of pastor and teacher.' The ruling elders are not so called to exclude the pastors and teachers from ruling, because ruling and governing is common to those with the other: whereas attending to teach and preach the word is peculiar unto the former. The ruling elder's work is to join with the pastor and teacher in those acts of spiritual rule which are distinct from the ministry of the word and sacraments.' Then follows a very excellent summary of the duties of elders.

That the *American Episcopal Church* practically recognizes the rights of the people, is abundantly clear from the following view principally given by an English Episcopalian:—

"The affairs of this church at large have been regulated since 1789, when its constitution was fixed, by a body called 'The General Convention,' which consists of an upper house, whereof the bishops alone are members; and a lower house, composed of the representatives of the clergy and laity from the several dioceses.

"All motions may originate in either house; but the concurrence of the majority of both houses must be obtained before they pass into law: and though the upper house, or house of bishops, has a veto on the proceedings

of the house of deputies, it cannot exercise this privilege without assigning its reasons in writing.

“ Besides this General Convention, there is one held annually in each diocese, but at different seasons of the year, in the different dioceses, from June to November inclusive, composed of *the clergy and lay delegates* from every congregation. Here regulations are made for the government of their own particular concerns throughout the diocese, but they must not be contrary to the constitution of the general church ; the state of the diocese is reviewed ; the proceedings of the year are reported ; matter is prepared for being laid before the General Convention ; and an equal number of *clergy and laity*, not exceeding four of *each*, is chosen to represent the state of the diocese in that assembly. ‘ There are attached to each congregation a body of lay assessors along with the clergyman, who conduct all cases of discipline.’

“ Hence they believe their form of church government and discipline to be not only the most pure and primitive, but also most in unison with their civil institutions. In it they recognise the important principle, that all orders of men, affected by the laws, should have a voice in framing them ; and they maintain that all the advantages of deliberation, of experience, and of security to individual rights, of which their civil constitution boasts, are secured in the organization of their church.”

The thoroughly liberal character of the government adopted by all denominations of *Congregationalists*, is too perfectly understood to need any particular exposition ; and though to observers it has appeared to be—as, indeed, it has been designated, — “ a pure democracy,” yet Davidson in his “ *Congregational Lectures*” has presented it in a view which, in the management of the affairs of individual churches, assimilates it very closely to that of the Methodist New Connexion : —

“ Much idle declamation has been employed on the anomaly of ‘ referring every decision to numbers and suffrages, and placing all that is good, and venerable, and in-

fluent among the members themselves, at the feet of a democracy.' This objection to congregationalism is virtually based on the assumption of the system being a pure democracy. But it is a mistake to think so. The highest or legislative power is not vested in the people. They are not the rulers. Christ alone properly governs, inasmuch as He alone is lawgiver. The judicial and executive powers are originally vested in the church, which transfers the latter to overseers or pastors who carry the laws into effect. The aggregate assembly retains the judicial functions with which it has been entrusted by Jesus Christ; while a council composed of select members, are empowered to execute the decisions made in accordance with the sovereign laws. Thus a church has all the functions necessary to a well balanced constitution, distributed too in such a manner as to secure general liberty. If the judicial power belonged to the clergy alone, or if they were constituted governors irrespectively of the people, the freedom of the society would be infringed. But they possess the executive functions in consequence of being elected by the people, and are thereby prevented from exercising oppression or tyranny.

“ We have said that the people devolve on a few persons, *i.e.*, the elders, the execution of the laws which Christ has given for the conduct of all. It is the duty of such governors under Christ to expound the principles of the New Testament, to uphold them in their paramount claims over the members of the society, to point out the particular application of them as occasion may require, and to be the organ of the people's decisions in every matter which comes before them. They direct the proceedings; declare and carry out the laws by which the people have voluntarily bound themselves. In choosing these office bearers, the members promised obedience to them in the Lord. Thus they govern only by means of those set over them, to whose just decisions they are bound to bow.”

Without entering here into a particular examination of the precise points of similarity or difference between the

ecclesiastical polity of the Methodist New Connexion and that of the respective denominations which have thus passed under review, the fact—(and it is the only one to which the writer of this article attaches real importance)—is brought out with sufficient clearness to command universal assent, that in its association of a lay-eldership with the teaching ministry, the New Connexion stands identified with *all the churches of the Reformation*, as well as with the anti-papal churches by which that illustrious event was preceded, and nearly all the Protestant communities which have been subsequently established.

It now only remains briefly to point out *the reasonableness* of such an association. And that it rests on principles of *natural right*, and is, therefore, *in itself*, reasonable, might be fairly inferred from the facts already established,—that Infinite Wisdom appointed it for purposes which are common to all countries and times, and that in all ages it has been established by the purest Christian churches. By some, this alone might be deemed *sufficient* proof, while others might suppose that all proof of *reasonableness* is unnecessary, being superseded by the yet higher ground of Divine authority. It is, however, not only permitted to man, but required from him, as a rational being, to search out, where he can, the reasons even of *Divine* appointments: and the importance of the subject seems to require that each of the foundations on which it rests should be laid open to the view, and that all the great principles it involves should be clearly traced. An attempt to bring out these principles, and thus to evince *the reasonableness* of such an association of the churches with the ministry, as is established in these pages, was made some time ago, and issued in the publication of the following views:—

“1. Men, as rational and moral beings, have, both in their own persons, and in surrounding objects, a property and corresponding rights, of which they cannot justly be deprived, except as a punishment for crime, or to secure a greater public good.

2. The end of government is not the *bonheur* or *emolu-*

ment of the governors, but the order and happiness of the governed; or, in other words — the welfare of society at large.

3. As no one is either infallible in judgment, or absolutely perfect in moral principles and character — and as the possession of absolute power tends both to warp the judgement, and excite irregular passions, and thus leads to injustice; a government in which the several classes of Society are fairly represented, is the most likely so to legislate and rule, as to harmonize the jarring interests, provide for the diversified wants, and secure the order and happiness of the whole.

4. In order that such representation may be effective, it must not only exist in the inferior courts, but it must extend to the *supreme legislative assemblies*; securing there that expression to the general voice, and that influence to the general will, without which, neither the true interests of the society are likely to be understood, nor are its liberties likely to be perpetuated.

“These are the strong grounds, on which, as Britons, we rest our claims for a representative government; and this is the extent to which we require that representation to be carried. For this we have been long and arduously contending; and, thanks to the God of Providence, we have at length, happily succeeded. These great principles apply, we think, as naturally to religious, as to civil society, and refer as directly to the church as to the body politic. Though in the church, Christ is the supreme head, or king, — though his laws, as given in his word, form that rule of faith and practice, from which there lies no appeal, and, therefore, the members of that church are not at liberty to act according to their will, — yet even those laws have to be explained and applied; and notwithstanding their general clearness and extent, they leave a considerable range for subordinate legislation and government. This being the case, let it be observed,

1. In religious society, members have a direct personal interest in the ministry they support, — the places of worship they build, — the doctrines they hear, the ordinances they share, — and the religious associations they form. —

These have been instituted either by them, or for their sake. The members, therefore, form that community, to which the temporal goods, the religious ordinances, and both the offices and officers of the community belong, or for the benefit of which all were instituted. They, consequently, have as direct an interest in legislation and government,—in the due administration of the laws of the community—and in the right appropriation of its property, as they possess in civil society.

“ 2. In the Church, as well as in the world, the end of government is to secure the order and happiness of the whole body, by the enactment and impartial administration of necessary laws, and the right appropriation of its property.

“ 3. In the church, neither perfect wisdom, nor absolute rectitude is found in any particular class of persons, whether pastors or members ; therefore, notwithstanding the deference and esteem that may be due to ministers, as the general expounders of the law of Christ, yet they cannot be entitled either to implicit faith, or universal obedience. Contrariwise, their liability to err in judgement and practice, renders it necessary that others should be associated with them, to direct by their counsels, and support by their influence ; to prevent decisions by which some might be injured, and others grieved ; and to assist in the adoption of such measures as the wants and wishes of the community may demand. The community too, having such a property and interest in all its own institutions, possesses an unequivocal natural right to *require* such an association. The right, in fact, exists as perfectly in *religious*, as in *civil society* ; and may, therefore, be freely claimed and exercised in the former, as well as in the latter of these situations. The representative system of government, which, as Britons, we hold so dear, and on which alone, as we have been made to feel, our civil liberties can securely rest, is equally adapted to *religious* society ; and there also it presents the surest guarantee against the errors of ignorance and prejudice, and the aggressions of covetousness, ambition and revenge.

"4. Representation in the church, to be efficient, must be extended to the highest, as well as to the lowest legislative assemblies; nor does it seem easy to justify the association of others with the ministry, in leaders' and quarterly meetings, except on principles that will as clearly prove the necessity of such an association in district meetings and conferences. If, indeed, the security of public liberty requires that such an association should exist, when the interests only of an individual member, or of a society, or of a circuit, are concerned, much more is it required in those assemblies, the decisions of which deeply involve the liberty, the peace, and the welfare of *the whole body*.

To the views thus propounded, the following observations may perhaps be advantageously added.

In the first stages of Christian society its founders may find it necessary to exercise an authority, the *perpetuation* of which would be both unwise and unjust; and which, therefore, they may soon feel themselves called upon to relax; just as the father of the family finds it imperative gradually to relax the authority he once justly exercised over his children, till it merges in the counsels of the most disinterested, the longest tried, and the most highly esteemed friendship. The reins of authority, too, may be sooner slackened in the church, inasmuch as it is composed, not of children, but of men, who, under the teachings of wisdom and the liberal administrations of law, may soon be fitted to exercise the right of suffrage both in the election of officers and the general management of affairs,—as in the first Christian churches; while some of them may be qualified for association with the stated ministry in the general duties of government. Circumstances, and a state of society also, will arise in which such an association will become not only expedient but imperative. The most eloquent and efficient *teacher* is not in every case the best *ruler*; nor are the qualifications which best fit for the practical duties of government found inseparably connected with superior pulpit talents: and instances will be found in which the talented teaching minister will be as inferior to the experienced and

prudent lay-elder in some of those qualifications, as the zealous and eloquent Apollos was inferior in Christian knowledge to the good Aquila and Priscilla, when they took, and "taught him the way of the Lord more perfectly." Did the men, therefore, who are entirely devoted to the public ministry invariably possess teaching qualifications superior to those of every other officer and member of the church,—but which, especially among Methodists, is not the case—yet it would be as absurd to claim, on this ground alone, the exclusive right of legislation there, as it would be for the eloquent and successful pleaders in our courts of justice to demand an exclusive patent for government in the state.

Nor could pre-eminence in *every requisite qualification* give, of itself, sole legislative and executive-authority. It must therefore be sought in other considerations; either *individuals* must be found who possess a natural *inherent* right to govern, or whom God has, by some special revelation, appointed to govern; or *the Community* must possess the right to elect its own officers, and to hold them responsible for the due discharge of official duties. The first of these suppositions has found no advocates; but the doctrine that kings, and prelates, and priests, have a *Divine right* to govern, and are responsible to God alone, was long and zealously taught; and, unquestionably, the passages adduced in support of the Divine right of kings in the body politic, are not less strong than those employed in relation to the ministry in the church. It having however been found that such a doctrine, as applied to the former, is incompatible with the natural rights of men as intelligent and social beings,—that, by fostering the worst forms of selfishness in the governors, and the most slavish principles and habits in the governed, it generates evils little less in magnitude than anarchy itself,—and that every passage adduced in support of it admits of a legitimate interpretation which is in perfect harmony with natural rights and the most liberal forms of government,—kings are now no longer assured that their right to govern is from God alone, and that to *him only* are they responsible, but they are truly taught

that although *government* is of Divine appointment, and is, therefore, imperative, yet as its end is the welfare of the governed, *they* are entitled to judge both of the *form* and *measures* of government, and to possess therein that influence and control which shall most effectually secure the end of its institution. That control, experience has long since fully proved, only an identification with the government by means of representation can give. It is therefore justly claimed. All these circumstances seem to apply as naturally to the Christian church as to civil society; and unless it can be shown, either—that there no government at all is necessary,—or that the end of government there is not the good of the community,—or that all that good merges in the ministry alone, the other classes having neither privileges to claim nor rights to vindicate,—or that hierarchal government has been found to be the most effective in securing the purity, and peace, and prosperity of the church, and is the *only form* of government compatible with the laws of Christ and the usages of the apostolic churches,—it will follow that the same rights exist in the ecclesiastical body as in the body politic; and in the former, equally as in the latter, the governed will be entitled to be represented in, and thus identified with the government, and allowed that direct voice and control which form the only sufficient guarantee for the continuance of public liberty.

That such an arrangement to be *effective* must be *universal*, is evident at the first glance. Whatever reason can be assigned for the principle of association *at all*, will equally plead for the *universality* of its application. No reflecting Briton would deem his liberty secured by *any constitution* of the lower judicial courts, if, after acquittal there, he could be condemned and punished by some one or more of their superior officers, or by another court composed of a different order of men, as judges, or ministers of the crown. Nor would the Commons of these realms deem their privileges, whatever they might be, to rest on a solid basis, so long as they had no direct voice in the *supreme legislature*, whatever

their influence might be in *the inferior* assemblies. On the other hand, as influence is much more easily, and much more powerfully exerted from above than from below, partly in consequence of the superior authority which exists there, and of that respect to which authority is entitled, with greater safety to the interests of public liberty may all influence be abandoned in *the lower*, so long as it is retained in *the higher* departments of government. This is equally true as applied to *religious society*. If, to secure the order of that society, different assemblies exercising different degrees of authority are necessary, — and if the association of the churches with the teaching ministry is necessary in *any* of those assemblies, it is much more necessary that such association should exist in the *highest* than in the *lowest* of them ; as without this, concessions made, — perhaps reluctantly, — by the higher to the lower, may, should circumstances seem to render it safe, be retracted ; privileges granted, may be taken away ; liberties apparently guaranteed by one enactment, may be subverted by another ; or recognized rights may be boldly trampled upon, and law openly violated, yet the delinquent may be sheltered or applauded by the order to which he belongs, and whose authority his wrongs were, perhaps, designed to extend. That this is not *hypothesis* alone, the history of *every* hierarchal government, whether papal or protestant, too clearly proves.

But while the correctness of both the premises and conclusions thus presented is acknowledged, so far as they relate to *the body politic*, yet their legitimate application to the church is denied. Civil government, we are told, is earthly in its source and objects ; but the Christian church is a purely Divine Institution, and is purely spiritual in its character and aims ; and to apply the same principles to both, is to degrade the latter by bringing it down to a level with the former ; and to confound things, which differ so widely, as to render all reasonings from one to the other not only illogical but absurd. In the state, God has established no particular form of government — given no code of laws — prescribed no modes of procedure. Here, there-

fore, men are left to adapt their governmental institutions and their legislation to those temporal, and ever-changing circumstances, which render immutability in the forms and measures of government either the most palpable inconsistency or the most deadly incubus. But the Christian church being adapted to *the inner man*, — to objects spiritual and eternal, — to a nature, and wants, and interests, which are the same in every country, and in every form and class of society, — it presents an institution in which permanency in forms of government and modes of operation is easy; yet in which, not human reason, but Divine Inspiration, both must and does direct. To this it is sufficient to reply —

First, that however things may differ, whether in their objects or in many of the circumstances with which they are connected, yet in other circumstances, and some of them of great importance, there may be entire agreement, and great principles and modes of procedure may exist which are equally applicable to both. Such is obviously the case with respect to *government*, in the relations in which it stands both to civil and religious society. In both relations, the *subjects* of government are the same — intelligent and moral agents: the *reasons* for government are the same — the imperfection of human powers and acquirements, and the irregularities of human passions and habits: — the *objects* of government, as has been abundantly shown, are the same — and *the imperfections of the governors bear the same relation to those of the governed, in the church as in the world*. How wide soever, then, the differences may be in other respects, yet in all the circumstances which form the basis of government and determine its character, the approximation is so close, or rather the identity is so perfect, as to justify the conclusion, that the same *principles* of government are equally applicable both to the church and the body politic; and that, unless a Divine interdict can be adduced, *they ought to be so applied*. — But, second, not only is no such interdict found, but in the New Testament, government is represented as being, in both cases, a Divine

appointment,—and obedience is enjoined in the same general terms, only with some differences singularly hostile to the objection under review. If in relation to the ecclesiastical body it is affirmed, — *God hath set some in the church, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers — helps, governments, &c.* ; in reference to the body politic it is with equal clearness stated, — *The powers that be are ordained of God. — They are God's ministers, attending continually upon this very thing.* If in relation to governors in the church it is commanded, — *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves* ; obedience to civil rulers is enjoined in language equally imperative, and the duty is enforced by threatenings which are never employed in the support of ecclesiastical submission : — *Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God. — Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God : and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.* — But, third, although the New Testament neither holds up any models for imitation, nor furnishes any specific commands, requiring the application of the principles of liberty to *civil government*, yet in reference to the governors and government of *the church*, such models and requisitions are supplied. — There, *the governed* are required to *Try the spirits* ; — *to prove all things* ; — *to put away from among themselves the evil thing* ; — *to anathematize the teachers of another gospel* ; — they are seen associated with their rulers in the maintenance of the discipline of their respective churches, and they are subjected, by their common Lawgiver, to corresponding responsibilities. Surely such an *application* of the principles of liberty in the Christian church, must demonstrate their *applicability* ; and the man who, in the face of such facts, labours to prove that no such analogy exists between government in the church and in the body politic, as to justify the application of the same principles of liberty to the former, which are so fully claimed and recognized in the latter, may evince his qualifications as an ingenious sophist, but will never *thus serve* the cause of truth, nor prove himself entitled

to the character of a correct reasoner. On this subject, as on every other of practical importance, Reason and Revelation are seen—not in hostile attitude employed in the demolition of each other's work; but harmoniously uniting to render truth more plain, by the convergence of their different lights; and to secure its increased stability and wider spread, by the exertion of their combined powers.

For the striking difference in the language of the New Testament as applied to civil and ecclesiastical governments, while one reason is found in the fact, that it leaves worldly interests to be regulated and advanced by the gradual developments of reason and science,—interfering with them only as they affect the interests of the inner man and of eternity;—another reason is found in *the essentially different characters* sustained by the subjects of the respective governments. The government which has reference to worldly and material interests, being applicable to man not only as enlightened and civilized, but as *grossly ignorant* and in the *lowest state of moral degeneracy*—influenced by the wildest passions and reckless of the rights of his fellows,—it *must*, at times, be *despotic*, and obedience to it, as such, must be rendered imperative. But the church being composed of *the spiritually enlightened and regenerate*, or at least of those whose lives attest the sincerity of their Christian profession, a community is seen, fitted to exercise, under the guidance of competent rulers, the rights of Christian citizenship, and to share all the liberty in the church, which in an enlightened and purified state of civil society is so justly claimed and conceded. And thus, too, in the bosom of the church is fostered the love of *civil* liberty, and thus the moral principles and practical habits are formed which best fit for its exercise.

The *reasonableness* of the general system of government adopted by the Methodist New Connexion, and which, as has been shewn, is presbyterian in its principal features, is clearly brought out in the following statements:—

“If the maintenance of discipline be all important to the interests of true religion, it is a matter of no less im-

portance that it be conducted with mildness, prudence, and wisdom. Rashness, precipitancy, undue severity, malice, partiality, popular fury, and attempting to enforce rules which Christ never gave, are among the many evils which have too often marked the dispensation of authority in the church, and not unfrequently defeated the great purpose of discipline. To conduct it aright is undoubtedly one of the most delicate and arduous parts of ecclesiastical administration, requiring all the piety, judgement, patience, gentleness, maturity of counsel, and prayerfulness which can be brought to bear upon the subject.

“ Now the question is, by whom shall all these multiplied, weighty, and indispensable services be performed? Besides the arduous work of public instruction and exhortation, who shall attend to all the numberless and ever-recurring details of inspection, warning, and visitation, which are so needful in every Christian community? Will any say it is the duty of the pastor of each church to perform them all? The very suggestion is absurd. It is physically impossible for him to do it. He cannot be every where, and know every thing. He cannot perform what is expected from him, and at the same time so watch over his whole flock as to fulfil every duty which the interest of the church demands. He must ‘give himself to reading;’ he must prepare for the services of the pulpit; he must discharge his various public labours; he must employ much time in private, in instructing and counselling those who apply to him for instruction and advice; and he must act his part in the concerns of the whole church with which he is connected. Now, is it practicable for any man, however diligent and active, to do all this, and at the same time to perform the whole work of inspection and government over a congregation of the ordinary size? We might as well expect and demand any impossibility; and impossibilities the great and merciful Head of the church requires of no man.

“ But even if it were reasonable or possible that a pastor *should*, alone, perform all these duties, ought he to be willing

to undertake them; or ought the church to be willing to commit them to him alone? We know that ministers are subject to the same frailties and imperfections with other men. We know, too, that a love of pre-eminence and of power is not only natural to them, in common with others; but that this principle very early after the days of the apostles, began to manifest itself as the reigning sin of ecclesiastics, and produced first Prelacy, and afterwards Popery, which has so long and so ignobly enslaved the church of Christ. Does not this plainly show the folly and danger of yielding undefined power to pastors alone? Is it wise or safe to constitute one man a despot over a whole church? Is it proper to intrust to a single individual the weighty and complicated work of inspecting, trying, judging, admitting, condemning, excluding, and restoring, without control? Ought the members of a church to consent that all their rights and privileges, in reference to Christian communion, should be subject to the will of a single man, as his partiality, kindness, and favouritism, on the one hand, or his caprice, prejudice, or passion on the other might dictate? Such a mode of conducting the government of the church, to say nothing of its unscriptural character, is, in the highest degree, unreasonable and dangerous. It can hardly fail to exert an influence of the most injurious character both on the clergy and laity. It tends to nurture in the former a spirit of selfishness, pride, and ambition; and instead of ministers of holiness, love, and mercy, to transform them into ecclesiastical tyrants. While its tendency, with regard to the latter, is gradually to beget in them a blind implicit submission to clerical domination. The ecclesiastical encroachments and despotism of former times, already alluded to, read us a most instructive lesson on this subject. The fact is, committing the whole government of the church to the hands of pastors alone, may be affirmed to carry in it some of the worst seeds of Popery; which though, under the administration of good men they may not at once lead to palpable mischief, will seldom fail in producing in the end the most serious evils, both to those *who govern and those who obey.*"

“The plan of conducting discipline by means of a succession of judicatories, admitting of appeal, provides for redressing many grievances which do not appear otherwise to admit of a remedy. According to the Independent or strictly congregational system, as suggested in a preceding page, when a member of a church has been unjustly censured or cast out, he has no appeal, there is no tribunal to which he can apply for relief: yet his case may be an exceedingly hard one, loudly calling for redress.”*

Dr. Dwight, though a congregationalist acknowledges, “there are many cases in which individuals are dissatisfied on reasonable grounds with the judgement of a church. It is perfectly obvious that in a debate between two members of the same church, the parties may in many respects stand on unequal ground. One of them may be ignorant, without family connexions, in humble circumstances, and possessed of little or no personal influence; the other may be a person of distinction, opulent, powerfully connected, of superior understanding, and of great personal influence, not only in the church, but also in the country at large. As things are in this world, it is impossible that these persons should possess, in any controversy between them, equal advantages. Beyond all this, the church itself may be one party, and a poor and powerless member the other. In this case, also, it is unnecessary to observe, the individual must labour under every supposable disadvantage to which a righteous cause can be subjected. To bring the parties in these or any similar circumstances as near to a state of equality as human affairs will permit, it seems absolutely necessary that every ecclesiastical body should have its tribunal of appeals, a superior judicature, established by common consent, and vested with authority, to issue finally all those causes which, before a single church, are obviously liable to a partial decision.”

“The Presbyterian, when accused, has the advantage of a trial by jury. He is not called to take his place and

* Miller.

plead his cause before some one person from whom he has no appeal, but he stands like a free man to defend himself before a jury of his peers. Should he conceive that the elders of the congregation of which he is a member have done him injustice, he has the right of appeal to a superior court, composed of men unacquainted alike with him and his accuser ; a court in which none of those who have already tried him will be allowed to take any part, and in which it is almost impossible that he shall be partially dealt with. But if he should, he has at once another appeal to our highest court, in which the representatives of the whole church are assembled, and where no local or petty prejudices can affect him.

“ The Presbyterian form of government has an adaptation for all varying circumstances and situations. We know of no country of civilized men, where the greatest amount of happiness to the majority, would not be secured by a representative government ; and we know of no circumstances, where a similar form of ecclesiastical rule might not be expected to produce the same results. If the church be planted in a new country, and there exist only a single congregation, Presbyterianism makes provision for its wise government, by the appointment of a number of intelligent, and experienced, and pious elders. If the church be extended over a province, or a continent, Presbyterianism secures the unity and integrity of the whole, by its capability of attending, through its system of delegation, to the remotest districts. By its General Assembly, and synods, and presbyteries, and sessions, each congregation is under special superintendence, while the whole are united as one body, one army, one kingdom, under the direction of the supreme council, in which the most eminent men are enabled to concentrate their wisdom, and energy, and talents, for the good of the entire church.” †

In concluding an investigation which has extended much further than was at first designed, a few general remarks

* Denham.

must suffice. It has, perhaps, been made sufficiently manifest, that in all the great principles and leading characteristics of government, the polity of the New Connexion of Methodists, perfectly harmonizes with that which the apostles established, — which the churches retained till it was subverted by the encroachments of hierarchial power, — and which was restored by the churches of the Reformation, in proportion to the extent to which the Reformers were permitted to follow out their convictions, — and, that the Connexion embodies in its laws and institutions, and carries into operation in all its meetings, those principles of liberty which alone practically recognize the natural rights of man in society, and by which alone those rights can be secured.

Its enlightened founders have combined in its polity to a great extent, the excellencies of the ecclesiastical systems of the principal evangelical sections of the church. While adopting the Presbyterian association of churches, with its several judicatories, and its representative system of government; they also approximated towards Independency, by the extension both of the numbers and functions of the lay-eldership, and by the right of suffrage given to the people in the admission of members, — in the appointments to various offices, — and in other matters relating to the order of the respective churches; and they retained at the same time, the official orders and names, together with the disciplinary and financial regulations of the Wesleyan stock from which they sprang.

Such is the Ecclesiastical Polity by the instrumentality of which, under the blessing of the Giver of all grace, the purity, — and liberty, — and success of the community have been secured during a period of fifty years. That under such a system, *liberty* should be lost, except by the grossest negligence, is impossible. While the ministry is entirely dependent on the confidence and voluntary support of the churches — while the people are associated with the ministry in the local meetings, either by the lay-eldership or by their chosen representatives, — while the same *association* exists in the highest assemblies, to which the

people have thus direct access, and on which they can thus exert a direct influence,—and when every thing done even in these assemblies must be permanent or momentary—an efficient enactment or a nullity—as it may be approved or condemned by the respective churches,—the cause of liberty is secure, and the establishment of a priestly despotism is impossible. These statements are equally true as applied to *the doctrinal and practical purity* of the churches. It has, indeed, been supposed, that, should an exigency arise, and should heterodoxy find, in the stated ministry, a popular and influential advocate, the lay-influence introduced into official meetings would enlist itself under the hostile banner, and thus, in spite of the antagonistic efforts of the ministry, render the cause of error victorious. The exigency has arisen:—But the anticipation has signally failed. In one of the most numerous Conferences which the annals of the Connexion have furnished, and to which the representatives were sent with a perfect knowledge of what lay before them, delinquency found among the lay-members, not only *the fewest supporters*, but some of its *firmest opponents*.

“Here, then, is a system, which, with the enlarged spiritual views of Methodism—its religious ordinances—its diversified instrumentality—and its wholesome discipline, combines a mode of government that 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 spiritual despotism, however disguised or modified.”

CHAPTER V.

PROVIDENCE. — EARLY YEARS. — ALEXANDER KILHAM. — WM. SMITH. — IRELAND. — PATERNAL FUND. — BENEFICENT FUND. — INCREASE FROM 1803 TILL 1813. — RICHARD WATSON. — CHARLES DONALD. — JAMES PARRY. — RICHARD WATSON AND THE SYSTEM OF THE NEW CONNEXION. — WILLIAM THOM. — INCREASE FROM 1813 TILL 1823. — LITIGATION RESPECTING CHAPELS, BY THE OLD CONNEXION. — JOB RIDGWAY. — GEO. RIDGWAY. — JOHN GRUNDELL. — DEED OF SETTLEMENT. — JOHN M'CLURE. — HOME MISSION. — HANLEY. — INCREASE FROM 1823 TILL 1833. — IRISH MISSION. — ROBERT HALL. — JAMES MORT. — IRISH NEW CONNEXION. — SAMUEL HEGINBOTTOM. — JOHN HENSHAW. — DAVID BARKER. — WILLIAM DRIVER. — ENTERPRISE IN CHAPEL BUILDING. — INCREASE FROM 1833 TILL 1840. — NEW HYMN BOOK. — JOSEPH MANNERS. — WILLIAM BLACK. — DUDLEY. — WESLEYAN ASSOCIATION. — MISSION TO CANADA. — WILLIAM HASLAM. — LIST OF NAMES. — CONNEXIONAL CRISIS. — PAYMENT OF CONNEXIONAL DEBTS. — CONSTITUTION OF DISTRICT MEETINGS. — REMOVAL OF THE BOOK ROOM TO LONDON. — CHAPEL FUND. — JUBILEE CONFERENCE. — DEED POLL. — MODEL TRUST DEED AND FORM OF CONVEYANCE. — STATISTICS. — JUBILEE FUND. — JUBILEE TEA PARTY IN THE FREE TRADE HALL, MANCHESTER. — HIGHER HURST CHAPEL. — HUNSLET CHAPEL. — JONATHAN AKROYD. — JONATHAN THORNHILL. — EBENEZER.

PROVIDENCE is on the side of truth and righteousness. Of this the history of the Methodist New Connexion is highly illustrative. There is not so much that is bold and brilliant *in its career*, as there is in the advancing course of some

other Communities, which hold sound doctrine and maintain godly discipline; but there is more than enough in the good it has done and in the progress it has made, to demonstrate that God is with it.

During the early years of its existence, the New Connexion made little advancement. No surprise should be felt at this circumstance. The difficulties attendant on the formation of a religious body, especially at a period of controversial excitement, are numerous and formidable. These difficulties are too obvious to require formal notice. So strongly did they check the onward movement of the New Connexion, that at the close of five years, the increase in the number of its members was merely two hundred and forty-three. That is, from five thousand and thirty-seven in the year 1798, one year after the division, to five thousand two hundred and eighty, in the year 1803. The experience of the Protestant Methodists and of the Wesleyan Association — both of recent establishment — has been more discouraging than the above. After struggling with their difficulties a few years, the Protestant Methodists merged in the Wesleyan Association. At the present date the Wesleyan Association has several thousand fewer members than it had ten years since, a little while subsequent to its commencement. It is, therefore, now, clearly seen that the New Connexion had reason, even when it was small and feeble, to thank God, take courage, and go forward.

The "New Itinerancy" in 1797, consisted of seven preachers, who were appointed to labour in the Leeds, Sheffield, Hanley, Manchester, Liverpool, Chester, and North Shields circuits. Four of this little band were the Revds. Alexander Kilham, William Thom, John Grundell, and James Mort. These brave and holy men were faithful to the Connexion until death. In the years 1798 and 1799, we find amongst others, the honoured names of the Revds. William Haslam, William Styan, John Revil, Charles Donald, William Driver, George Wall, and John M'Clure. The Rev. William Thom was president, and the Rev. Alexander Kilham was secretary of the Conference in 1797 and 1798. That remarkable

minister, the Rev. John Grundell, was president, and that amiable and holy gentleman, Mr. Robert Hall, of Nottingham, was secretary of the Conference in 1799.

Nothing, perhaps, tended so much at the beginning to dishearten and impede the New Connexion, as the premature death of Mr. Kilham. This melancholy event took place on the 20th of December, 1798. It was spoken of, we regret to state, somewhat exultantly by many of the Wesleyans. The friends of the New Connexion hung their harps upon the willows and wept; but though cast down they were not destroyed. In the mystic dispensation they heard the oracle, "Cease ye from man, and trust in the Living God." Exactly two months after the decease of Mr. Kilham, another serious loss was sustained by the Connexion in the death of Mr. William Smith, of Hanley. This liberal and zealous christian fell asleep in Jesus, on the 20th of February, 1799.

The Life of Mr. Kilham, published by the New Connexion, and sold at its Book Room in London, being within the reach of almost every one, a brief account of him here is all that is requisite.

Alexander Kilham was born at Epworth in Lincolnshire, on the 10th of July, in the year 1762. It is remarkable that the birth place both of the founder of Methodism, and of the reformer of the polity of Methodism, is Epworth. The parents of Mr. Kilham were members of the Methodist society, and their godly example and instructions exerted a salutary influence on his youthful mind. When Mr. Kilham was about twenty years of age, he was made a subject of saving grace. While conversing with three young persons on religious experience, he was strongly convinced of sin, and being invited by them to attend a prayer meeting, he went. There he was so much condemned and accused by his conscience, that he thought himself the worst of sinners. He continued two or three hours weeping without comfort, finding himself so exceedingly sinful. Sometimes his heart was broken and tears flowed plentifully, at other seasons he was so hard and stupid that he could not

weep at all. After remaining thus for three or four hours, he obtained mercy. His own words are these. "I found a sudden change on my mind. I could not have wept 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."

In the year 1785, Mr. Kilham made an offer of himself to Mr. Wesley, to travel as a preacher, and was appointed to the Horncastle circuit. There and elsewhere till the close of his ministry, he was a workman not to be ashamed, edifying the people of God, and turning sinners into the way of righteousness. A quarto volume of the handwriting of Mr Kilham, bound in rough calf, is in the possession of the Rev. Thomas White Ridley, whose wife is a niece of Mr. Kilham, being a daughter of his brother Mr. Simon Kilham. This valuable relic was presented to Mr. Ridley by Mr. Benjamin Jackson, of Leeds. It contains six hundred and fifty-eight pages, and presents on every page, very closely written, in a neat and legible hand, the thoughts of Mr. Kilham on various passages of Holy Writ, amounting to six hundred and fifty-eight in number, forming the outline or ground-work of as many sermons. These outlines exemplify his great industry, extensive reading, judicious mode of arrangement, rich experience, and deep piety. At the end is a copious index, referring to each passage and directing to the page. At the commencement is the following beautiful and appropriate prayer.

"O God, the great director of all who trust in Thee. I now humbly implore Divine wisdom, to help me rightly to divide thy word, and to give the true sense of the scriptures to those who may hear me preach. Conscious of my own ignorance and inability for this work, I most sincerely beg, for the sake of thy dearly beloved Son, to be directed by thee in explaining the different passages I may enter upon; and pray that I may so open them, that all who hear may receive benefit. O give me thy Holy Spirit to dwell in me, and open to my mind what he has caused to be written for our instruction. By him do thou take the seals from the

books, and the darkness and blindness from my heart, that I may fully know the mind of God in the word, and be able to teach it to others according to the true import of it. I now fully put myself into thy hands, pleading to be made an instrument of good to many souls. Let me be endued with power from on high, to apply to the hearts and consciences of those who hear, the great truths which concern their salvation. O Lord, hear and help for the sake of Jesus Christ, our gracious Redeemer and Advocate. Amen."

Mr. Kilham considered himself — to use his own words — "*a real dissenter.*" This profession of dissent, involved him in discussion with some of his brethren of the Wesleyan ministry. Amongst others, a Mr. Fish, at that time one of Mr. Wesley's preachers, having heard Mr. Kilham speak of the Methodists as being dissenters, entered into a controversy with him on the subject. An interchange of letters between them was continued once a month for two years, Mr. Fish taking the church, and Mr. Kilham the dissenting side of the question. Mr. Fish, at first, was exceedingly strong in his opinions; and whether he was convinced of his error by Mr. Kilham or not, the fact is ascertained that he shortly afterwards was ordained, and went to the West Indies as a Dissenting minister, to preach the gospel.

After the formation of the New Connexion, Mr. Kilham was in labours more abundant. Writing from Sheffield he states. "I have had much labour and writing since I saw you, and for near a fortnight I have been distressed with want of sleep. The labour is so great here that none could go through what I have to encounter, unless his bones were like brass, and his flesh like iron. We have increased so much lately, that our chapel is quite too small. On Sunday evening we do not know what to do. We have very good singing; the chapel rings from end to end. The people beg of me to spare myself, but how is it possible when the harvest is so white already. We have blessed meetings. The people taste of the good word of life, and of the powers of the world to come. There is a general quickening in the *old members*, and about fifty new ones, with backsliders

have come forward. I hope God will give me health, and make his face to shine upon us more gloriously than ever."

About five weeks before his death, Mr. Kilham went on a toilsome journey into Wales, amidst very inclement weather. But he was not left without consolation. While there he wrote, — "After morning preaching, I could not but weep for joy, the Redeemer appeared so precious, and his ways so delightful. It is impossible to express the joy I felt in seeking the salvation of my fellow creatures."

On his return from Wales to Nottingham, at the end of November, he was evidently weak and much exhausted. On Wednesday, December 12th, 1798, it was thought he took cold, in walking home from the country, between four and five miles, after preaching. The next morning he had a violent pain in his back and shoulders. The pain in his back and shoulders increased, and on Friday morning it was excessive. On Saturday evening he was electrified, and found relief from it. A blister was, also, applied that night. On Tuesday morning he appeared to be recovering, although he had slept so little. In the evening, after tea, Mr. and Mrs. Smith, of Hanley, being present, and Mr. Smith's weak state making it necessary for him to retire soon to rest, Mr. Kilham engaged in prayer with extraordinary enlargement of heart and depth of feeling. On Thursday morning, December 20th, after a restless night, he complained of extreme pain, and several times brought up large quantities of blood. While in this distressing state he said, — "I am going to my Redeemer. If I am dying now, tell all the world that Jesus is precious." When distress and sympathy with him were shown by Mrs. Kilham and others, he remarked, — "As the afflictions of Christ abound, his consolations abound in my soul." Soon after he stated, — "What I have done in regard to the Methodist Connexion, so far from repenting, I rejoice in it at this moment. I bless God that he made me an instrument of doing it. O that I had done it more faithfully." His last words were — "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." His age was thirty-six years.

William Smith, was born at Walsall, in Staffordshire, on the 26th of December, 1763. His parents were of the excellent of the earth, and they instructed him in the way of truth and piety. In early life he was converted to God, and while yet a youth he began to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. He was frequently called to address large congregations in Wolverhampton, and was made very useful in its adjacent villages. Providence favoured him with temporal prosperity, but he was not puffed up thereby. With a grateful and humble heart, he willingly consecrated his talents, property, and influence, to the cause of Jesus Christ. His benevolence was not bounded by the narrow limits of a sect. Whatever was designed for the general diffusion of knowledge and religion, had his warmest approbation, his fervent prayers, and his generous support. His attachment to religious liberty, was ardent. He took a liberal and decided part in the debates which agitated the Methodist body, during the life of Mr. Kilham, labouring earnestly to establish Methodism, on the broad and sure foundations of reason and scripture.

In the year 1797, he attended the Leeds Conference as a trustee representative, and finding the preachers determined to hold fast, and exercise absolute power, he united with the friends of a liberal constitution, in forming the Methodist New Connexion. On his return to Hanley, he opened his house for the worship of God. There the gospel was preached till a more convenient place was obtained. In the year 1798, through close application to business and study, his health began to fail. During his illness, he visited Mr. Kilham, at Nottingham, little thinking that his beloved friend and minister would enter another world before him. Yet so it was. The next day Mr. Kilham went to his reward. A few weeks afterwards, Mr. Smith joined him in the realms of light and bliss. After using, without success, every means for the restoration of his health, which human skill could suggest, he began to set his house in order, feeling that he must die and not live.

When his temporal affairs were settled, he expressed a

desire before his eyes were closed in death, to be carried into the new chapel, which had been opened a few months previously, by the Revds. A. Kilham, W. Thom, and J. Grundell. This affecting scene is thus described by a friend, who witnessed it. "We placed him in the pulpit. He looked around while his eyes and his tongue spoke the pleasing feelings of his heart. He then pointed out the spot where he wished to be laid, a wish which the trustees assured him should be sacred. After this he prayed most fervently for himself and family, for all that were present, and especially 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 brethren 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 bulwark in the earth. Never do I remember so solemn a season; every heart was moved and every eye suffused with tears." Before he died, having the full assurance of faith and hope, he pointed out the 13th verse of the 14th chapter of Revelation, as the text for his funeral discourse. When nature was almost spent, he said to a near relative, "My ardent but submissive desire is to be with Christ, which is far better." Ere long his desire was fulfilled. On the 20th of February, 1799, at the age of 35 years, his spirit left our world, to unite with the spirit of Kilham, before the throne, in singing the song of the Lamb.

At the Conference of 1799, a number of friends in Ireland were recognized as members of the Methodist New Connexion; and the Rev. John M'Clure was stationed at Lisburn. Arrangements also were made for effectively conducting the business of the Book-room, and most of the preachers present deposited half-a-guinea in the hands of the secretary, towards a Fund for the support of superannuated ministers, and the widows of ministers. Before the close of the year a small hymn book, containing a collection of hymns from various authors, was published as an appendix to the large Hymn Book, consisting of hymns by the Revds. John and Charles Wesley.

At the Conference of 1803, the Paternal Fund was established. This Fund is sustained by public collections in our chapels, and subscriptions from our friends. From this fund allowances are given towards the support of the children of our preachers before they reach a certain age, instead of charging each sum on the circuit where a preacher labours, as part of his salary. Poor circuits are thus relieved from oppressive burthens; and the claims for the whole of the children are fairly distributed over the Connexion.

At the same Conference the Beneficent Fund was established. This fund is supported by the annual subscriptions of our friends, and the annual contributions of our ministers. Its objects are, the relief and support of disabled and aged ministers in the Methodist New Connexion, and of their widows and orphans. "Already it has been a staff to the aged, a helper to the widow, and an inheritance to the orphan." That worthy gentleman Mr. Samuel Heginbottom of Manchester, subsequently of Ashton, by whose exertions the fund was brought into existence, and who, in addition to an annual subscription, contributed immediately, a benefaction of fifty pounds towards its support, was appointed the treasurer thereof.

At the close of the ten succeeding years, the increase of members in the New Connexion was 2787: being from 5280, in the year 1803, to 8067, in the year 1813.

In the minutes of 1804, the name of the celebrated Richard Watson occurs. He is stated to have travelled one year as a circuit preacher, and he is stationed in Manchester. It is not so generally known as it ought to be, that to the New Connexion belongs the honour and joy, of having brought this extraordinary man from obscurity, and placed him in a position whence his path was as the shining light, till it merged in the glories of eternity. The Rev. Richard Watson discharged the duties of an able minister of the New Testament in the New Connexion, eight years. Nor were his gifts and graces unappreciated. Once he was a member of the annual committee, three *times* he was secretary of conference, and the scenes of his *ministry* were the large towns of Liverpool and Manchester.

The sermon on "The Evils of Ignorance," in the first volume of his sermons, published at the Wesleyan Book Room, was preached in Mount Tabor Chapel, Methodist New Connexion, Stockport, in the year 1806. The sermon also on "Religious Meditation," in the same volume, was preached during his first appointment in the Manchester circuit. His respect for the New Connexion did not cease when he had rejoined the Wesleyans, and shone like the sun amongst the most popular and gifted of their ministers. The solemn rebuke he administered while a circuit preacher in the New Connexion to a Wesleyan preacher, who had represented those who left the Wesleyans as "dying under a cloud," was not enfeebled by his subsequent conduct. He did not disparage the friends he had left. He held them in grateful esteem,* and the ministers of the New Connexion invariably met a cordial welcome at his residence. Honour to his memory! He was a great, good, and useful minister of Jesus Christ. May his mantle rest on the rising ministry of both the Old and the New Connexion.

Charles Donald was born in the North of England. His father was a Presbyterian, and regularly engaged with his family in the public worship of God. When Charles left his father's house as an apprentice, his morals became corrupt, through association with wicked company. At the expiration of his apprenticeship he went to Leeds. On his way from Newcastle to Leeds, he sold his Bible and the other religious books which his father had given him. This circumstance was very grievous to him in after years. At Wortley, near Leeds, he obtained employment. There he followed the desires of his evil heart and became remarkable for wickedness. A revival of religion having taken place at Wortley, Mr. Donald was led by curiosity, or some

* So earnest was this feeling, it incited him while holding an interview, on one occasion, with the Rev. Wm. Haslam, to step forward, fasten a plain gold brooch on his breast, and request that he would wear it as a token of affectionate remembrance. The friendly gift was accepted and worn with pleasure.

other motive, to attend the preaching of the gospel. The word came with power to his soul. He was convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. The lips which had been given to cursing and bitterness, gave expression to the melting prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner." He left his sinful companions and began to meet in class. The leader of the class beheld him with surprise and joy. He continued to hold fellowship with the people of God, and he soon obtained, through faith in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of all his sins. When he had found mercy, he laboured zealously to promote the salvation of others. He engaged in prayer at the prayer meetings, sometimes gave a word of exhortation, and being very diligent in the cultivation of his mind, he became in a little while, an acceptable local preacher. At the time of the division, he resided at Armley. He read and approved the writings of Mr. Kilham, and he united with the few members who left the Wesleyans in Armley, and formed a part of the New Connexion. Of this small society he continued a member till he was called out as a circuit preacher. The conference of 1798, appointed him to the Liverpool circuit. Afterwards he laboured in Sheffield, Nottingham, Manchester, Huddersfield, Hull, and Dewsbury circuits. In all these circuits he was highly acceptable and useful. In Hull he continued three years, and the congregations increased so much, that the friends found it requisite to enlarge their chapel. There, however, his health began to decline, and more than once he was raised up from sickness which had brought him nigh to the grave. On his removal to Dewsbury, he was joyfully received, and a bright prospect opened before him of extensive usefulness. But a cloud soon came over it. After preaching a short time, he was laid entirely aside. His affliction continued through eight months. When he felt fully satisfied that his sickness was unto death, he sent for the Rev. James Mort, with whom he had laboured with considerable satisfaction in Sheffield and Manchester. They held very serious conversation, and after prayer his countenance beamed

with holy joy, and his spirit greatly rejoiced in God his Saviour. Subsequently, from time to time, he received strong consolation from above. God was with him and his heart was glad. Before he died he expressed a desire that all his papers should be burnt in his presence. This desire was complied with. The burning of his papers shows that he had very humble views of himself, but it prevents justice being done to his memory. He had naturally a strong understanding, which he greatly improved by reading and reflection. He was ardent in feeling, prompt in decision, and energetic in action. His whole soul was in the work which his Master had given him to do. Sincerity and disinterestedness shone conspicuously in his character. The following incident will illustrate his abrupt frankness. A young man who had been brought to God through his instrumentality, remarked to him on one occasion during his illness, "I shall be a star, Mr. Donald, in your crown." This reply was instantly given, "Never mind my crown, take care of thy own." His labours were abundant, and productive of blessed results. Many were turned thereby into the way of righteousness. He persisted in preaching till his enfeebled constitution could sustain him no longer. Towards the close of his protracted affliction, his spirit seemed full of heaven and of God. In this delightful state of experience, on the 9th of April, 1808, aged 34 years, he laid his body down and ascended on high, to rejoice for ever before the throne of the Lamb. Thousands attended his interment, and weeping and lamentation were made over his grave. His son, the Rev. Charles James Donald, emulates his example, as a minister of the Methodist New Connexion.

Two months after the demise of Mr. Donald, James Parry, the youngest son of Mr. Parry, of Chester, — a man of God, well known and much respected in the New Connexion, — was taken to heaven in the fifth year of his ministry, at the early age of twenty-one years. He was a young minister of extraordinary promise. He had a fine imagination, an earnest heart, a wonderful command of language, and his

piety was almost seraphic. His conversion took place when he was scarcely fifteen years of age. Though still in his boyhood, the language with which he set forth the great change, in a letter written to his parents soon afterwards, is admirable. "When I was cast down and ready to give way to my sorrows, these words were applied with power to my mind; 'Son be of good cheer, thy sins are forgiven thee.' The Lord hath spoken peace to my soul. I have drank of the waters of life, — the streams that make glad the city of God. The Lord hath raised me up to the third heavens. He hath opened mine eyes and given me the most glorious blessings." At the age of seventeen, he went out as a circuit preacher. He attracted large congregations, and his preaching was not in word only, but in power and in the Holy Spirit, converting sinners to God. His race was soon run: at its close he met death like a conqueror, and obtained a crown of life. To adopt the language of a classic writer, he was "one of those rare specimens of human nature which the Great Author of it produces at distant intervals, and exhibits for a moment, while he is hastening to make them up among his jewels."

A deeply interesting memoir of James Parry was written by the Rev. Richard Watson, and published in the *New Connexion Magazine*, for 1810. This memoir is characteristic of its writer. It contains evidence that the liberal system of the New Connexion was quite as favourable to the development of his lofty intelligence, as the system amidst which it afterwards manifested itself. The following extract shows a calm majesty of thought, equal to any of his efforts in later years. "Piety is manhood. Religion, though not the offspring, is the great instructress of reason. She alone has power to turn the mind, hitherto wandering over the scene of external objects, inwardly — upon itself: to contemplate its wants, its powers, and its destiny: to open a new world to thought; to supply from heaven and from God the subjects of meditation; and thus to expand and mature the intellectual of man." Justice to the *New Connexion* requires the introduction also, in this place, of

the views entertained by Richard Watson of its system of government. In his account of John Cash, published in the *New Connexion Magazine* for 1805, he writes: "John Cash, though a plain and unpolished man, understood as well as any of the Wesleyan preachers, the principles upon which a church should be governed, and the rights which they [John Cash and his friends,] as christians had to maintain. He discovered a radical defect in the old system: a power *assumed not delegated*: and exercised without limit and without accountableness." In his memoir of William Bradbury, published in the same magazine, he writes, — "Mr. Bradbury became a member of the *New Connexion*, from the purest motives. He espoused it from principle. He gave it his most cordial support, because he believed it to be founded on a system, better adapted to answer the important purposes of brotherly love, and christian edification, than that which he renounced. His wish, and the wish of every real friend of that *Connexion*, who stood forth so nobly in the defence of truth and gospel liberality, was that the church might be so regulated and governed, that by a mutual co-operation of ministers and people, by the interests of the whole body being legally made the joint interest of both, mutual confidence might be established, and the spirit of primitive Christianity revived." *

At the Conference of 1808, the law was made, which requires preachers at the close of their probation, and when publicly received into full connexion, to answer the various questions, relating to their Christian experience, call to the ministry, theological sentiments, &c., now set forth in our General Rules. At the Conference of 1809, the number of members constituting the Annual Committee, was increased from three to five.

William Thom, was born at Aberdeen, in September,

* The biographer of Mr. Watson, endeavours to show that these passages do not set forth his deliberate judgement. The attempt is a failure, notwithstanding the countenance given to it, by a letter of Mr. Watson's, written during an exciting controversy. It would have been far better, to have made a frank avowal, of change of sentiment.

1751. During his youth, considerable attention was paid to his education. He was not only a correct English scholar; he understood the Latin and Hebrew Languages, and made proficiency in mathematics. Before he was twenty years of age, he was converted to God, by the grace of the Holy Spirit. In the year 1774, he was taken out as a Methodist itinerant preacher, under the direction of Mr. Wesley. Twenty-three years, he preached the truth as it is in Jesus, and was made extensively useful, in the Wesleyan Connexion. He was held in high estimation by Mr. Wesley. This appears from the circumstance, that, although he was a junior preacher, he was appointed by Mr. Wesley, one of the hundred, whose names were enrolled in the Wesleyan Poll Deed. At the Leeds Wesleyan Conference, in 1797, when the preachers refused to consent, that "an equal number of lay-members, chosen by the people, as their representatives, should attend the Conference with the preachers, and be invested with the same power;" Mr. Thom, believing that the request of the people, was both reasonable and scriptural, sent an interesting letter to the Conference, from which the following is an extract.

"Dear brethren,—I cannot hesitate any longer to inform you, that I believe the people should be properly united with the preachers by delegates. I came to the Conference fully determined to continue in union with my brethren, if I could do so in sincerity of heart. I now feel myself obliged to declare, that I must withdraw, and act in union with those of the people, whose sentiments agree with my own. 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 with whom I have long been acquainted, and part from them with great reluctance. I am determined, neither to make the pulpit nor 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.

Praying that the great Head of the church may bless the members of his mystical body, in every part, and unite us all in him with the cords of divine love. — I remain, dear brethren, yours affectionately, WILLIAM THOM."

Mr. Thom's first appointment in the New Connexion, was to the Huddersfield circuit. The circuit was extensive, including Halifax, Leeds, Ripon, and some more distant places. But God was with him, and good was done. The next year, he was appointed to labour in Manchester. This year was crowned by Jehovah, with an increase of nearly two hundred members. He was afterwards appointed to the Nottingham, Hull, and Sheffield circuits. In 1804, Mr. Thom was appointed the Book-steward of the Connexion. This led him to Leeds, where in addition to the discharge of the duties of his new office, he preached twice on the Sabbath, and occasionally on the week-evenings. In 1807, Mr. Thom removed to Hanley, the Book-room having been taken thither from Leeds. "I know no part of the Connexion," writes the Rev. J. Mort, "where Mr. Thom could have spent the last years of his life with more comfort, than he did in the Hanley circuit; and it affords me great satisfaction to know that he was held in the estimation, and treated with the respect which his merits deserved." The last Conference Mr. Thom attended, of which he was also elected the president, being the sixth time of his holding this honourable office, was held in Chester, in the year 1811. From that time his health declined. Finding his weakness increase, he removed to the pleasant and hospitable residence of Mr. Bailey. While his end drew nigh, in answer to a question put to him, respecting the steps he had taken in forming the New Connexion, he said,—"I am satisfied they were good steps." To Mr. John Ridgway he remarked,—"I am living a life of dependence on God. He is my support and comfort. He is my confidence and trust. After a few struggles we shall meet again without separation." To Mr. George Ridgway, he said,—"I bless God, I find my mind in a comfortable state, and I have found it so ever since I was

taken ill. I know that if the Lord sees good to remove me, I shall go where I shall be more perfect in knowledge and in happiness, than I can be here." His soul was often engaged with God in prayer. Among other petitions he prayed, — "Lord, lift upon me the light of thy countenance, and make me to rejoice in thy salvation. O Lord my God, show me thy glory, and let my soul be ravished with the sight of it." In this state of holy and happy feeling, he exchanged mortality for life, on the 16th of December, 1811, aged sixty years.

At the Conference of 1813, resolutions were passed which brought the Irish preachers into closer fellowship with the Connexion in England.

At the same Conference, a settlement of the salaries of the preachers was effected. Serious complaints had been made, respecting the inadequacy of the income of the preachers, to meet their necessities, and a committee had been appointed by the previous Conference, to examine and report thereon. After a candid consideration of the subject, it was cordially resolved, that in addition to the use of a house and furniture, at the expense of the circuit, every married preacher in full connexion, should receive for himself and wife, twelve pounds per quarter; "*not less than two pounds per quarter for a servant;*" and in addition to these items "*not less than fourteen shillings per week for board.*" The allowance from the Paternal Fund, for boys under eight years of age, and for girls under twelve, to be six pounds per annum. Bills for medical attendance and travelling expenses, to be paid by the quarterly meeting.

The increase in the number of the members of the New Connexion, at the close of the following ten years, was 2727, namely, from 8067, in the year 1813, to 10,794, in the year 1823.

On the 2nd of January, 1814, our friends in Huddersfield, after a vain attempt to secure a reasonable settlement, were forcibly dispossessed of their chapel, by the Wesleyans. It being winter, they suffered serious inconvenience, but in due time were enabled to build, and wor-

ship in a new chapel, which they called Rehoboth. About this period, and subsequently, the Old Connexion made various attempts to wrest chapels from the New Connexion. Respecting these proceedings the writer* of an "Apology for the New Connexion," makes the following just remarks. "On a careful review of the Division, I can only detect one procedure on the part of the friends who formed the New Connexion, which deserves the character of an error. I allude to the retention of those chapels, by virtue of majorities of trustees and people, which by law were subject to the Conference. The trustees, it must be observed, had given away a control of which they had no adequate conception, they acted, therefore, in error, but the error was of so questionable a nature, that even counsel differed on the fact. Engagements sanctioned by law, whether just or unjust, the law enforces, and its decision must be conclusive. While I admit thus far, I am entitled to plead the hardship of the case, and especially to complain of the refusal of the Old Connexion to refer these chapels to arbitration. Where they had erected other chapels, ours were no longer wanted, they had no real property in them, and some compensation, which in every instance has been offered, had certainly been more to their honour, than long and expensive litigations. I complain also of attempts to subject trustees to heavy exactions, with a view to having these law suits stopped. I complain, again, of endeavours to wrest chapels from us, to which the Conference knew it never had the shadow of a claim. So that on a balance of the only dubious question at issue, I conceive the scale to preponderate in favour of the New Connexion."

Job Ridgway was born at Chell, near Tunstall, in the Staffordshire Potteries. His father was dissipated and thoughtless, but his mother had the fear of God before her eyes. In his ninth year, his father took him and an elder brother to Swansea, in South Wales. There he had to feel the loss of a good mother, and to labour for the meat

* John Ridgway, Esq.

that perishes. In his tenth year, he first heard a Methodist preacher, whose discourse was on the duty of prayer. The sermon filled his heart with grief, and he was incited by it to pray both night and morning. At the close of his apprenticeship, he went for a short time into Staffordshire, and from Staffordshire to Leeds. While at Leeds, he made acquaintance with lovers of pleasure, and was addicted to the foolish and wicked practice of card playing. On returning late one evening from the card table, his conscience whispered to him, "Hast thou not had enough of pleasure yet?" and he resolved to leave his sinful companions, but he did not immediately act on his resolve. At length, while going one Sabbath morning, with some of his companions to the race ground, he felt so unhappy, that he ran away, and returned home. After this, the gospel came with great power to his heart. He felt that he was the chief of sinners, and that his iniquities were a burthen too heavy to be borne. Then he began to look to Jesus, and fervently did he pray, —

"O let me feel Thy blood applied,
And live and die forgiven."

In a little while, he trusted in Christ, and found forgiveness. This took place on the 21st of June, 1781, in his 22nd year. A few months afterwards, he went to reside with his brother,* Mr. George Ridgway, in Hanley. Here

* Mr. George Ridgway was well known and greatly beloved in the New Connexion. Before his house was delivered the first sermon preached in Shelton, by the Methodists. At the division in 1797, he cheerfully assisted in forming the New Connexion. He saw our first chapel raised in Shelton, and he was spared to assist in the erection of the existing spacious edifice, and to worship within its walls. Nine times he was elected to represent the Hanley circuit in the Conference; and once he was appointed the treasurer of the Connexion. His character is thus given by one who knew him well. "His temper was peaceful and forgiving; his conversation was pure and cheerful; his disposition was friendly and unsuspecting; his liberality was abundant, even to the extreme of his circumstances; his conduct was uniform and upright; his piety was unaffected and sincere, and in the church he shone with peculiar lustre." His last hours were full of joy and peace. He fell asleep in Jesus on the 11th of July, 1823, aged 65 years.

he began to pray with the family, while the neighbours came round the window, some to hear, others to mock. Ere long, both his brother and sister sought and found peace with God. This brought to his memory a prayer which he had offered on a mountain in Yorkshire, that God would raise him up some companions in Hanley, especially from among his own relations. Nine months had not elapsed when God had raised up not only his brother and sister, but twenty-five others, most of them young converts. On March 25th, 1785, Mr. Ridgway was married at Newcastle Church, in the presence of good Mr. Hanby. After his marriage, he took the preachers in, whenever they came to Hanley. He began to preach also, and continued to meet his class, from which two new classes were drafted. When the New Connexion was formed, Mr. Ridgway, and others in Hanley, were some of its first members and supporters. At the commencement, the friends had no chapel in which to worship. In process of time they obtained a coach-house, which they fitted up very comfortably, and many a happy season they had in it. Numbers in that humble place were brought to the knowledge of Christ, and many of them, now, are inhabitants of heaven. At length, the temporary place of worship was taken down, in order to make way for the building of a chapel. During the erection of the chapel, various inconveniences were felt, but the work went on prosperously. In due time, the chapel was finished, and they obtained two preachers to labour in the circuit. In 1802, Mr. Ridgway commenced working a manufactory near the Cauldon Canal. In 1804, he built a house adjacent to the manufactory. This year he presented a benefaction of five guineas to the Beneficent Fund, and commenced an annual subscription to it, of one guinea. When he entered his new house, he remembered with pleasure and gratitude that he had built a house for the Lord, before he laid a brick of his own. In 1808, his eldest son, Mr. John Ridgway, being nearly twenty-three years of age, and his younger son, Mr. William Ridgway, being more than

twenty-one, and having served him at Cauldon Place, six years, he gave them an equal share in the business. In 1809, his beloved wife, with whom he had lived twenty-five years, in harmony and affection, was removed to a better world. He felt this to be a sore trial, but he manifested resignation to the will of God. Nor was he left comfortless. His daughter, whom he tenderly loved, supplied in a good degree, the place of a lamented wife and mother. He was now relieved, in a great measure, from the active pursuits of business, but he still evinced unconquerable ardour for the prosperity of Zion, and the salvation of precious souls. At home, he was exemplary for his conscientiousness in reading the Scriptures, and engaging in prayer with his family. He was among the first and most regular in the house of God, whoever was the preacher, and whatever the state of the weather. And such was his determination to promote attendance on the week night preaching, that it was a standing rule, in his manufactory, for no person to work on that night after a certain hour. The Lord's Supper was an ordinance he highly prized, and thankfully enjoyed. As a class leader and local preacher, he was eminently useful. In the autumn of 1812, the society was favoured with a degree of prosperity which rendered it needful to enlarge the chapel. The task was arduous, the season late, and every thing to prepare, but the soul of Mr. Ridgway was in the work, and before the winter set in, he had the pleasure to see it roofed and safe. After its re-opening, he preached in it several times, and he had the joy of seeing the work of God prosper throughout the circuit. Mr. Ridgway was elected five times to represent Hanley in the Conference, and once he was appointed treasurer of the Connexion. In 1814, the Conference was held at Hanley. Whit-Sunday came. He was early on the alert, attending the seven o'clock preaching, and again at half-past ten. The love-feast was, indeed, a feast to him. He scarcely knew whether he was in the body or out of the body. In the evening, the chapel was *extremely* crowded, and he stood on the pulpit steps, and

looked round with high satisfaction. On Monday morning, he was up and in the chapel at five o'clock, even then it was crowded. After breakfast, he returned to the Conference, being the lay-representative of the circuit. He joined in the singing and prayer, business began, a painful case was under consideration, he rose, and with propriety and moderation recommended temperance in debate. He then resumed his seat. In a short time, his eldest son observed his eyes look red and suffused with water, and his head reclining on his breast, exciting a redness in his face. The whole appeared the effect of drowsiness. He called to him, and was answered with a smile, which dissipated his rising apprehensions. But in a few moments the blow was given, and he fell aside insensible. Every means to restore him was tried without success. After ten hours of insensibility, he peacefully ascended to the heavenly world, on the 30th of May, 1814, aged 54 years. His two sons, John and William Ridgway, have worthily trod in the steps of their honoured parent, and have grown grey in the service of God; being to this day, liberal and active members of the Methodist New Connexion.

On the 14th of September, 1815, Salem Chapel, Halifax, having been re-built in a commodious style, and fitted up in a chaste and skilful manner, was re-opened by the Rev. Thomas Allin. Halifax was originally part of the Leeds circuit. In a few years it rose from an adjunct society, consisting of a few members moving in humble life, to be the head of other societies. Afterwards it was favoured with prosperity to a remarkable degree. At length it was found requisite to pull down the chapel erected when the society was small, and build a new one adapted to the claims of the thronging congregation. Since this was done, the word of the Lord has had free course, many souls have been converted, and a valuable circuit now exists, requiring and receiving the labours of four circuit preachers.

John Grundell was born at Sunderland, in the county of Durham, in the month of June, 1761. His parents were respectable, both with regard to moral character and worldly

circumstances. While a child, he was so severely afflicted with the small pox, that he lost his sight. Various means were afterwards employed to restore his sight, but without success. During his childhood, his parents became reduced in circumstances, and his mother, a woman of high spirit, was so affected by the change that she died in a few weeks. About five weeks after the decease of his mother, he was bereft of his father. Thus the blind orphan became totally destitute, and to use his own expression, "a child of Providence." About this time, his active and vigorous mind attracted the attention of a gentleman, who held a situation in the Custom House, at Sunderland, and was well known by the name of Captain George. This generous individual paid the expense of sending him to school, and was truly kind to him in many other respects, for which Mr. Grundell was ever grateful. By means of the help thus afforded, he obtained a correct knowledge of the English language, and became well qualified to instruct others. At the age of eighteen, his conversion took place. The instrument of this great change was the following passage of holy writ. "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." He felt convinced that he had not the Spirit of Christ. His distress arising from a conviction of guilt and danger was exceedingly great, but he was enabled, ere long, to trust in the Lamb of God. While looking to Jesus, his sins were forgiven, his soul was renewed, and the Spirit of Christ was sent into his heart crying, "Abba-Father." He had been for some time a hearer of the Methodists, and he now united himself with the society. As his acquaintance with the gospel and his christian experience enlarged, he felt a strong desire in his heart to do good, and it was the opinion of those who knew him best, that he was qualified to move in a public sphere. By the request of his friends, and from an impression that it was the will of God, he preached his first sermon in the Market Place, South Shields, in the year 1780. It was soon evident that he had not run before he was sent, for God owned *his labours*, and some who came to mock, remained to

pray. 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. Mr. and Mrs. Laws, of Sunderland, requested him to make their house his home, on all occasions. In the lobby, a nail was fixed for his hat, a particular corner was appropriated for his stick, and a little room, which they designated the prophet's chamber, was neatly fitted up for his place of rest. He was now wholly employed in preaching the gospel, and his fame spread far and wide. Before long, invitations were given him to preach in various parts of the kingdom, and with the consent, and in some instances by the direction of Mr. Wesley, he went to Alnwick, Leeds, Sheffield, Nottingham, and elsewhere, in most of which places he remained several months. The chapels in which he preached were generally crowded with hearers of every description, and while he spoke, they listened with silence, astonishment, and satisfaction. During a great part of the year 1793, Mr. Grundell resided at Barnsley, in Yorkshire. There he formed a correspondence with Miss Mary Scales, and in November of the same year, they were united in marriage. The wife of Mr. Grundell was very suitable, both for himself and his circumstances. Of this he was perfectly sensible, and he always considered her a gift from God. On his marriage, Mr. Grundell fixed his residence at Byker, a village near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In 1797, Mr. Grundell gave up his situation at Byker, and became a minister of the "New Itinerancy." His first circuit was Nottingham.

In 1798, he was appointed to the Hanley circuit. In this circuit he was highly respected and remarkably useful. In December, he went at the invitation of Mr. Kilham, to Nottingham, to obtain pecuniary help for a chapel. It was a parting visit. Mr. Kilham, was unexpectedly called to his reward, and Mr. Grundell performed the mournful task, of committing his remains to the dust, in the presence of

a large assemblage of sorrowing spectators. On leaving Hanley at the Conference, 1799, Mr. Grundell went to Manchester; and the circuits in which he subsequently laboured, were Sheffield, Halifax, York, Alnwick, London, Stockport, and a second time in Halifax. In 1813, agreeably to the wishes of his numerous friends, and of himself, he was appointed to the North Shields circuit. Here he became so generally venerated and beloved, that the boys would pause in their sports, and repeat to one another as he passed along the streets, — “That is cannie [good] Mr. Grundell.” An encouraging revival having taken place at Shields, Mr. Grundell was appointed to labour there a third year, and a collection was appointed to be made in several circuits, in behalf of our chapel in Sunderland. Mr. Grundell, left Shields for this purpose in the beginning of August, and returned early in October. While absent from Shields, he was often engaged in preaching, this with much walking in order to obtain subscriptions for the chapel, greatly fatigued him. But the kindness which was shown him in every place, and the prosperity with which he saw God blessing the Connexion, amply compensated him. Hence on his return, he expressed himself as having been in every respect, exceedingly gratified. He was first sensible of his last illness on the 14th of November. Still he continued preaching. On Sunday, November the 19th, an additional chapel was to be opened at North Shields, and it had been announced for him to preach in the forenoon. On Saturday evening, he felt so unwell that he said if he were not better in the morning, he would have to give up his appointment. When the morning came he felt somewhat relieved, and resolved to preach. He did so with some difficulty, from the 20th of Exodus and 24th verse. “In all places where I record my name, I will come unto thee and I will bless thee.” After this, his affliction rapidly increased. On Sunday, the 26th, he said, “I know I am on the rock.” On Tuesday, the 28th, he was extremely ill, and requested his medical attendant to speak freely on his case. “As to what you call danger,” he said, “I think nothing of that,

it will not alarm me." When it was intimated that there was no likelihood of recovery, Mrs. Grundell inquired if he had any fear of death. He replied, "Death? No, he is under my feet." On Wednesday, the 29th, at about nine o'clock, he seemed on a sudden as if inspired, and asked who were in the room. Mrs. Grundell replied, "Mr. Blackwell, Mr. and Mrs. Thompson, and myself." "You," said Mr. Grundell, "are a sufficient number to bear witness to my dying testimony, that I love the Lord God with all my heart, and with all my soul, that I have resigned myself, soul and body, and all that I have into His hands; that I know He has accepted me, in and through the Redeemer, and that I am His entirely and eternally. What I have done with regard to the Connexion, I have done from principle. In my conduct I have not been capricious and fickle, but I have remained firmly attached to the principles with which I set out. I testify to you that I rest as firmly as perhaps ever soul did on that gracious declaration — 'He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them.' Mark, I say, as ever soul did." His appearance and deportment, when speaking thus, were the most magnanimous and dignified imaginable. The day before he died, he partook of the Lord's Supper. While doing so, he was filled with confidence, joy, and hope. He exclaimed, "O that I could unlearn the English language. I want to join the spirits of the just made perfect." About noon, on Friday, December the first, 1815, he said, "I shall soon rest in heaven." These were his last words. Two hours afterwards they were verified. His age was fifty-four years.

In the year 1816, the draft of a Deed for the Legal Settlement of the Methodist New Connexion, was printed in the Magazine, and submitted to the judgement of the circuits, by order of the Conference, held at Huddersfield. On account of the prevalence, in some degree, of misapprehension, prejudice, and distrust, in relation to various provisions contained in the Deed, the adoption of it was

deferred. At a subsequent period, as will be seen in the course of this narrative, a mature and most valuable "Deed Poll" was adopted by the Conference, with the earnest and unanimous approval of the Connexion.

John M'Clure was born in the year 1778, at Malone, near Belfast, Ireland. In early life, being tall, well formed, and of active habits, he took the lead in the various sports which ungodly youths around him delighted to practice. In the year 1793, the Methodist preachers began to make known the glad tidings of salvation, in Milltown, where the New Connexion, at the present period has a class and a neat little chapel. The distance of this place from the residence of Mr. M'Clure was about two miles. Curiosity led him and some of his companions to attend one of the services. So novel, so devout, so pleasant were the people and the singing, that he was made a willing captive, and he said within himself, "This people shall be my people, and their God my God." Soon after, preaching was commenced at Malone, and one evening, the preacher, — Mr. Wood, — proposed at the close of the service, to form a class. John M'Clure was one of those who put down their names, and there, on the 31st of December, 1794, a class was formed consisting of forty persons. When he became a member, he gave his heart fully to God. Ere long, he was drawn with the cords of love to the cross of Christ, and believing on the suffering Son of God, he obtained, in answer to prayer, a satisfying assurance that his sins were forgiven, and that his name was written in heaven. After his conversion, his remarkable gifts became known and highly appreciated. He assisted at prayer meetings, and was frequently called upon to address the people. At these meetings he was made very useful. Many were awakened, and not a few were born again. In 1796, his name was put on the plan of the Belfast circuit, as a local preacher. The late Rev. Charles Mayne, who was then stationed in Belfast, formed a very high estimate of his talents and piety, and stated afterwards, that had he remained with the Wesleyans, he would certainly have been appointed to

a circuit. At this time, several of the Methodist societies in Ireland, were agitated by the same questions which led to the formation of the "New Itinerancy" in England. The issue of the controversy was the establishment of a New Methodist Society in Lisburn, and its neighbourhood. The leading members of this society, most of whom knew Mr. M'Clure, having heard that on more than one occasion he had expressed his sympathy with them and their cause, resolved to invite him to become their minister. Mr. Wm. Black was one of the deputation who expressed their wishes to him. Without much delay, he acceded to their request, and commenced his labours among them by preaching from part of the 16th verse of the 72nd Psalm. "There shall be a handful of corn in the earth, on the top of the mountains, the fruit thereof shall shake like Lebanon." As soon as it was known that he had joined the New Connexion, various means were employed, amongst others the offer of an immediate appointment to a circuit, to induce him to return to the Wesleyans. But he held fast his principles, and continued to labour in the sphere to which he had been called by Providence. His piety being sincere and highly devotional; his conduct unblameably upright; his bearing frank, generous, and condescending, yet fraught with unassuming dignity; his voice strong, clear, and musical; his preaching thoroughly Methodistic; and his manner in the pulpit peculiarly fascinating, earnest, and impressive; he drew together large congregations, and was made extensively useful. On May the fourth, in the year 1800, he married Miss Sarah Trelford, who was in all respects a help meet for him. In the autumn of 1800, he went to establish an interest in Dublin. He was accompanied thither by Mr. Wm. Johnston, of Lisburn, previously of Manchester, England. On the 7th of September, he opened the first meeting for worship in the Weavers' Hall, Dublin. He continued in Dublin till the spring of 1801, gathered a good congregation, and formed a society which kept together for years, amidst reproaches and difficulties, having no preachers except those whom God raised

up among themselves. On his return to Lisburn, he resumed the labours of the ministry among our friends there, with increasing acceptance and success. But while in labours more abundant, he had to suffer many privations. At length the scantiness of his income, and the growing necessities of his family compelled him to endeavour to augment his means of subsistence. With this design, in the year 1802, he opened a shop in Lisburn, to which Mrs. M'Clure attended, while he was engaged in other duties. His temporal claims were now met in a suitable manner, the pressure on the society relieved, and great success attended his zealous efforts to turn men from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. At this period his life was placed in extreme jeopardy. Two soldiers, under the influence of prejudice, produced by bigotry, contrived to enter a little parlour behind the shop, in a corner of which, at a window, Mr. M'Clure was sitting, reading. Without any warning, they drew their bayonets, and rushed upon him. Happily he saw them in time to spring to his feet, uplift the chair on which he had been sitting, and by superior activity and strength, parry their thrusts, till he reached the door leading into the kitchen, through which, with difficulty, he escaped. The soldiers being foiled ran away. Mr. M'Clure, the same day, had an opportunity of bringing them to condign punishment, but in the spirit of Him who prayed for his murderers, he declined doing so, and generously forgave them. In the year 1803, the English Conference passed a resolution allowing him ten pounds in recognition of his "faithful labours." Towards the close of the same year, he was put to great trouble and expense by being drawn to serve in the militia, and in his efforts to procure a substitute, endured much unkind treatment from interested parties. In 1806, he removed from Lisburn to Belfast, opened a business there, and continued instant in season and out of season, preaching the gospel, and labouring to promote the interests of the New Connexion, till the year 1813. He then found it requisite to relinquish his position as a cir-

cuit preacher, and to accept a situation under Victor Coats, Esq. While he held this situation, he regularly preached the gospel, and his respectable employer was a constant attendant on his ministry. In 1814, a dark cloud of trouble gathered over him. He was involved in a great fight of afflictions, and ere the conflict ceased, Mrs. M'Clure sunk beneath the pressure of disease and sorrow into the grave. The sickness and death of his beloved wife, under the painful circumstances in which he was placed, and without his having the opportunity of seeing her, was a fearful stroke to his sensitive spirit. Still he set his hope in God, and early in the year 1815, he entered on a situation in Dublin. He soon connected himself with the remnant of the society he had formed in 1800, and was made very useful among them. They met in a room in Whitefriar-street, behind the shop of Mr. Thomas West, an acceptable local preacher and leader. This room was soon filled to overflowing, and the friends found it requisite to remove to the Taylors' Hall, which they occupied till the death of Mr. M'Clure. In 1816, he was invited by our friends in Glasgow, to go thither, with the consent, and by the appointment of the Annual Committee. He did not, however, remove from Dublin. During March, 1817, he often appeared unwell, and gave himself to melancholy musings. In April, he seemed better, and manifested greater cheerfulness. On the third of May, he felt weak and feverish, and the subject of extreme pain. Medical aid was immediately sought. On the eleventh, he obtained a little relief, and the hope of recovery was cherished. This hope was soon extinguished; unfavourable symptoms returned, and it was seen that his sickness would bring him down to the grave. On the evening of the thirteenth, he had a sore conflict with Satan. Before midnight he obtained the victory, and spoke many comforting words to those around him. About three o'clock, when life was nearly gone, and he seemed incapable of speaking, Mr. Prince requested him to indicate, by a motion of the hand, that all was well with him. The eyes of the dying saint

immediately opened, and looking upward he raised his arm and very distinctly said, "Yes, all is well. My heart is bound by the cords of love." His eyes closed, and placidly smiling, he ceased to breathe, on the 14th of May, 1817, aged 38 years. His son, the Rev. William M'Clure is a devoted and useful missionary of the Methodist New Connexion.

In the year 1818, a Home Mission was established, and the sum of four hundred and twenty-four pounds seventeen shillings and nine pence half-penny, was contributed by the circuits, for its support. In the same year, the draft of a deed, for the settlement of the Book-room on trust, was laid before the Connexion, and carried into effect.

Towards the close of the year 1819, Bethesda Chapel, in the Hanley circuit, was taken down, and rebuilt on a magnificent scale. Messrs. W. Smith, J. and G. Ridgway, J. Meigh, J. Mort, T. Chadwick, S. Barlow, H. Taylor, and Jesse Barker — father of the Rev. David Barker, — with a few others, declared themselves at the Division in 1797, in favour of the "New Itinerancy." As soon after the Conference as circumstances would admit, a circuit preacher was sent to Hanley; but for some time the friends were compelled to worship in a private house. A coach house in Albion-street, Shelton, was the first building fitted up as a place of worship. In this humble sanctuary, many sinners found the preaching of the gospel, to be the power of God unto their salvation. This temporary place, was taken down in 1798, to make way for the erection of a chapel, capable of accommodating about six hundred persons. During the building of the chapel, great inconvenience was experienced by the congregation; but waiting with patience, they saw a tabernacle erected for the Lord of Hosts, which they entered with joyful hearts, believing that it would be made, what its name, Bethesda, imports, the House of Mercy. Nor were their expectations disappointed. The mercy of God in Christ Jesus, was effectually proclaimed in it, and numbers of the guilty race of Adam, have both sought and obtained *within its walls*, the knowledge of salvation by the remission

of sins. Here the society of Hanley and Shelton, continued to worship, until the year 1812, when by the blessing of the Most High, upon the labours of his ministers, and in answer to the prayers of his children, the place became too small, and our friends were under the necessity of enlarging the chapel, so as to contain one thousand persons. It was re-opened on the 8th of November, by the Rev. John Grundell, who had preached at its first opening. The Revds. W. Styan and S. Woodhouse, then in the circuit, assisted on the occasion, and the Master of Assemblies was present, to clothe his word with power. During the two following years, the showers of Divine grace descended in rich abundance on the society and congregation, and many were turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. The whole of the sittings were let in a few months after the chapel was re-opened, and numerous applications were made by persons who could not be accommodated, some of whom reluctantly withdrew, and took seats in other places of worship. Fresh and multiplied applications for sittings, continuing to be made, the trustees considered it their duty, to take the chapel entirely down, and erect a stately and sufficiently commodious edifice. This large and noble chapel, is sixty-nine feet in the main width, and one hundred and ten in length. It is capable of containing between two thousand five hundred, and three thousand persons. The extensive range of gallery, is supported by twenty-four iron pillars, each weighing about six hundred pounds. The interior of the chapel, is at once simple and elegant; the mouldings bold and chaste; the largest of the three vestries, somewhat handsome; the organ, built by Gray and Son, of London, for six hundred pounds, plain and neat; and the bude-lights, splendid and massive. The impression made on the mind, by a review of the whole, is in perfect unison with those feelings, which a place of public worship ought at all times to inspire. It was opened on the 7th of May, 1820, by the Revds. W. Driver, T. Allin, and A. Jackson. There is a spacious burial ground adjoining the chapel, and an extensive Sabbath school, having

ranges of upper rooms. The school will accommodate at least sixteen hundred children. Altogether the establishment, which was formed at an expense of ten thousand pounds, is one of the completest in the United Kingdom.

At the Conference of 1823, the report of a committee, previously appointed to revise and enlarge the Rules of the Connexion, was considered, and after various emendations, adopted. The rules in the amended form, were ordered to be printed as the General Rules of the Connexion. The same Conference directed, that a Sunday scholars' magazine, price two-pence, should be published by the Book-room.

During the next ten years, the increase in the number of the members of the New Connexion, was three thousand nine hundred and ninety; that is, from ten thousand seven hundred and ninety-four in the year 1823, to fourteen thousand seven hundred and eighty-four in the year 1833.

At the Conference of 1824, the home mission was relinquished, and Ireland was selected by the New Connexion, as its field of missionary enterprise. The following resolution indicates the new arrangement. "The Conference sincerely deploring the ignorance, superstition, and misery prevalent in Ireland, and believing that a field there presents itself, in which the Methodists of the New Connexion, as well as christians of other Denominations, may exert themselves to advance the interests of the Redeemer's kingdom, and promote the salvation of immortal souls—resolves, that the institution denominated 'the Home Missionary Society,' be henceforth exclusively devoted to the support of missionary labours in Ireland." The Conference of 1825, developed the plan in its details, appointed a committee to conduct the business of the Mission, and resolved on sending an English preacher to superintend the labours of the missionaries. The same Conference directed a committee, which had been previously appointed, to prepare a deed of trust for our chapels, to proceed in conjunction with the Annual Committee, to complete it and have it printed by the following October.

In the year 1826, our chapel in Nottingham, was consi-

derably enlarged. At the Division in 1797, the majority of the trustees of the Wesleyan chapel, as well as of the leaders of the society in the above town, being in favour of the "New Itinerancy," they kept possession of the premises. The right to the premises was litigated, and ultimately they were restored to the Old Connexion. These events led to the erection of a chapel by the New Methodists, in Parliament-street. This chapel was opened on Good Friday and Easter Sunday, in 1817, by the Revds. G. Wall, S. Barraclough, A. Haigh, and S. Woodhouse. The collections amounted to the handsome sum of one hundred and seventy pounds, three shillings, after a very liberal private subscription. Eight years afterwards, the trustees resolved to enlarge the chapel. They were led to do so by their inability to accommodate numbers of persons who applied for sittings; by the desirableness of improving the structure of the gallery; and by a wish to provide free sittings for the poor. Prior to the enlargement, the pews of the chapel would only accommodate five hundred and thirty-five persons: They will now seat one thousand and eight; beside which, there are one hundred and fifty free sittings. Its dimensions are forty-eight feet wide, and seventy-four feet long. The sum of six hundred pounds was subscribed towards the enlargement: and at the re-opening, in February, 1826, by the Revds. W. Driver, — Pickering, (Baptist,) and S. Woodhouse, the collections, notwithstanding a commercial panic, amounted to one hundred and fifty-six pounds. The Nottingham society differs perhaps from all others in our connexion, in the very large proportion of its female members. Of the three hundred and sixty-eight members which constituted the town society in 1839, not less than two hundred and fifty were females; leaving only one hundred and eighteen male members; or, not one-third of the whole. From this circumstance it will naturally be expected, that the society should be superior to others in female piety; and so it is. In other parts of our Israel many daughters have done virtuously, and are justly entitled to rank among the excellent of the earth, but the daughters of our zion in

Nottingham, appear to have excelled them all. Not to name any living ornaments of the society, blessed, thrice blessed, should we be, were all our churches favoured with such excellent women as were sisters Basset, Salthouse, Barlow, Sutton, Garton, Lamb, Amy, Horsley, and others, who have entered the rest which remains for the people of God.

Robert Hall was born at Nottingham, on the twenty-fifth of February, 1754. When a child, he fell into the water, but was providentially rescued from drowning. At the age of ten years, a person took him to hear Joseph Guildford ; concerning whom Mr. Wesley writes. — “ I never knew so weak a man made so useful.” Robert was too young to notice the weakness of the man, but he was struck with his zeal and piety. About the same time, he heard Captain Scott, a military officer who had spent his youthful days amidst the vice and dissipation common to a military life, but through divine grace had become a disciple of Christ and preacher of the glorious gospel. These, with other circumstances, made a powerful impression on his mind, and he resolved to attend diligently to religious duties. When he was seventeen years of age, he united with the Methodists. The residence of Mr. Hall was at Basford, more than three miles from Nottingham. This distance, he regularly went on the Sabbath, in all varieties of weather, to engage in the worship of God, until he built a tabernacle, principally at his own expense, on his own ground. About that period, Mr. Wesley occasionally visited and corresponded with him. The following is a reply from Mr. Wesley, in his usual laconic style, to an application made by Mr. Hall for assistance from Conference, towards the erection of Hockley Chapel, Nottingham.

“ London, Dec. 29, 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 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."

After the death of Mr. Wesley, Mr. Hall took an active part in the controversies which prevailed among the Wesleyans. When the Wesleyan Conference refused to concede the rights of the people, he assisted in forming the New Connexion. At that time he was in the prime of life; and he cheerfully employed his talents, his influence, and his resources in serving the cause he had espoused. Upon him devolved the editing of the first life of Mr. Kilham, published by the Connexion. From 1797 till 1805, he was seven times a member of the Annual Committee; three times a representative of Nottingham in Conference, and twice the secretary of Conference. When partial paralysis rendered him incapable of continuing these services, he still advised for the welfare of the community; assisted it with his property; and remembered it before the throne of grace. The office of class-leader, he held more than forty years. At the close of the year 1815, Mr. Hall relinquished attention to business, and removed from Basford to Sneinton. His physical infirmities continued to increase, but his spiritual consolations did not fail; they were made to abound more and more. Happy contentment, and faith in Providence, were the characteristics of his daily walk and conversation. One morning, on meeting the Rev. David Barker, he said to him,—"My poney has played me a trick, this morning, as I came down from Sneinton." "What did he do, Sir?" "Why he threw me over his head." "I hope you are not hurt?" "O, no. He gave his angels charge over me." This was said with his usual innocent and holy cheerfulness; indicating his child-like confidence, in the guardianship of his Heavenly Father. Mr. Hall was a firm believer in the doctrines taught by Mr. Wesley: especially the witness of the Spirit, and entire sanctification. He regarded these doctrines as eminently promotive of communion with God and joy in God. He did not consider mental improvement inimical to progress in piety. He

understood the French as well as the English language, and he had an extensive acquaintance with literature. While in business, he paid attention to chemistry ; and by various experiments introduced an improvement into the art of bleaching. He was also an excellent mechanic, and received a premium of forty guineas from the Society of Arts, for a useful invention. He was diligent in business, yet fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. For several years, it was his practice to be in his counting-house at five o'clock in the morning ; where he would spend an hour in reading, meditation, and prayer, before the arrival of the persons employed in the factory. His probity was unimpeachable : he loved truth and conscientiously fulfilled his engagements. He was kind to his servants ; and they, in return, highly respected him. His religion was deeply devotional. He lived a life of fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. Prayer was the element in which he breathed ; and the spiritual benefit he derived therefrom, led him, frequently to recommend it to others. Towards the close of life, he said to his excellent son-in-law, Dr. Higginbottom, " Persons 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." When his sons came to visit him he would sometimes ask them how they were getting on, in such words as these : " 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."

During many months, previous to his decease, he was confined to his upper room, and for weeks he was unable to speak, so as to be distinctly heard and understood. With serenity and patience, he waited all the days of his appointed time on the earth. At length the summons came ; and he departed on the sixth of August, 1827, aged seventy-three years, to be for ever with the Lord.

The Conference of 1827, directed a Catechism for the use

of children, to be published. The Rev. Joseph Manners, was appointed to prepare it; but afterwards the work devolved on the Rev. Abraham Scott, who wrote the Catechism now taught in our Sabbath schools. The same Conference made various new arrangements in relation to the Book-room, in order to render it more efficient and productive.

James Mort, was born in July, 1770, at Newcastle upon Tyne. When fourteen years of age, he was convinced of sin, while attending a love-feast. After this, by singing hymns, reproving iniquity, giving himself to prayer, ceasing from profaning the Sabbath, and attending preaching among the Methodists, he became exposed to much vulgar ridicule, which he endured for a season with patience. At length he gradually relapsed into evil habits. Three years he continued an exile from happiness, and from God. Twice he resorted to the theatre, and more evil was suggested to his mind, the few hours he spent there, than had been suggested to it during the whole of his previous life. He was extremely vain, and fond of dress and of the company of young persons. But self-accused and self-condemned, he was miserable amidst all his gayety. At the age of sixteen, he heard Mr. Wesley preach at Sunderland. When he saw the venerable man, moving down the aisle, with tremulous step, leaning on the arm of Mr. Hampson, the clergyman, his heart melted, and in order to conceal his tears, he sat down and covered his face. Not long after this circumstance, he was visited with a severe illness, which Jehovah sanctified to the conversion of his soul. His backsliding and sins, filled his heart with anguish, and he vowed that if spared, he would serve the Lord. On his recovery, he united with the Methodists, and fervently prayed for mercy through Jesus Christ. One Sabbath evening after public worship, he retired to engage in secret prayer. While imploring forgiveness, a change took place in his soul, from confusion and darkness, to glorious light; from fear, to filial confidence; from guilt and remorse, to exquisite joy and peace in the Holy Spirit. Being converted, he endeavoured to be useful. In 1791, he began to proclaim the gospel,

as a local preacher. In 1793, he was sent out as a circuit preacher, among the Wesleyans. In 1797, he assisted in forming the New Connexion, and was appointed to labour in Manchester. In 1798, he was stationed in the Huddersfield circuit. The congregations in most of the places were good ; Divine power accompanied the preaching of the truth ; and an increase was obtained of nearly two-hundred members. His next circuit was Sheffield. There the congregations were large, and he had much liberty and joy in addressing them. Subsequently, he laboured in Hull, Manchester a 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 all these scenes of labour, he was highly respected, and in some of them very useful. His appearance was grave, and towards the close of life, venerable. His discourses were thoroughly evangelical, and delivered with great solemnity and pathos. The gentleness of his manners, and his uniform piety, procured for him much love among our churches. Wherever he went, he was an epistle of Christ, known and read of all men. Sympathy and benevolence, were striking features of his character. No one was more willing than he to fulfil the injunction of Holy Writ, — “ Comfort ye, comfort ye, my people, saith your God.” While he was in Sheffield, bread was at a famine price. His consolatory addresses from the pulpit, and also in private, accompanied with relief to the utmost of his power, yea and beyond his power, rendered him exceedingly dear to the poor of our people. Happy is that minister, who is both able and willing to communicate for the temporal wants of his suffering fellow creatures. And happy are those friends, who when their ministers lack ability, furnish them with means for the relief of the indigent.

From the Conference of 1827, when Mr. Mort was stationed at Liverpool, till the commencement of autumn, his health, which for some time had been seriously declining, appeared to improve. With the advance of autumn, his

disease strengthened, and began to exhibit fatal symptoms. A constant and harrassing cough, attended with considerable expectoration, almost prevented attention to his pulpit duties. Nevertheless he continued to preach, till within three weeks of his death. He had been evidently for some time, preparing himself for the solemn event. The whole of his papers and manuscripts, were collected by him, and classed according to his opinion of their merits. Lethargy now began to oppress him, and he gradually became incapable of any close application, except communion with God, and earnest prayer. He had frequently expressed a wish, to live no longer than he could be useful ; and his Heavenly Master, in a remarkable manner fulfilled his desire. On Friday evening, December the seventh, he stated to his class, that on the preceding night, he had been engaged in prayer for several hours, and had experienced such a powerful manifestation of the Divine presence, as he never before enjoyed. On Monday evening, December the tenth, he preached his last sermon, from these words, — “Thy kingdom come.” On Sunday, December the thirtieth, he said to his son, — “The night is far spent, and the day is at hand.” On Monday morning, being asked if he felt Jesus to be precious, he replied, — “I do. Bless his holy name.” His last words were, — “God is my all in all.” In the afternoon of December the thirty-first, 1827, aged fifty-seven years, he left our world to dwell with God.

At the Conference of 1828, the Irish Mission, was constituted the Methodist New Connexion in Ireland ; having its own institutions, and holding its own Conference, but still receiving a superintendent and pecuniary assistance from England, and entitled to a suitable representation, in the English Conference.

On the eighth of June, 1828, South-street Chapel, Sheffield, was opened for divine worship. It was not the intention of our friends in Sheffield to build a second place of worship, when conversation was first held about a new chapel. The plan first proposed was to erect a very large chapel, instead of the old one in Scotland-street, and with

this view subscriptions were commenced. It being found impossible to obtain a suitable site in the neighbourhood, the friends were led to think of building a second chapel, in another part of the town, for the purpose of raising a new interest, and of rebuilding Scotland-street Chapel, for the accommodation of the old congregation. After due deliberation, it was resolved to do so, and before long, one thousand pounds were collected towards the new object, and deposited in the bank. An eligible plot of ground was purchased fronting the south entrance into Sheffield. Salem Chapel, Halifax, was fixed upon as a model, and the building has been made like it except the windows, which are larger, and the entrances to the gallery, which are placed in wings, producing a noble frontage. The dimensions of the chapel are forty-eight feet wide, and sixty-three feet long, not including the wings, or the orchestra. It will accommodate one thousand persons. In addition to the liberal subscription specified, the collections at the opening services amounted to more than one hundred pounds. While the payment of the subscriptions was in progress, the following incident occurred, and is worthy of record. A few years before, one of our friends on his death bed gave to each of his five children, a new golden guinea, to keep as a memorial of a father's affection. At one of the monthly payments, five bright guineas were laid down, and in the collector's book an entry was made thus. "Mrs. ——'s children, five guineas." On speaking to their mother, it was ascertained that with her concurrence, the children had transferred their father's dying gift to them, to assist in extending the cause of their father's God. Mrs. —— assigned as a reason why she had permitted her children to give this money as a subscription to the new chapel, that had her husband been living, nothing would have rejoiced him more, than such an undertaking, and she felt confident, that could his consent have been asked, he would have agreed to what his children had done.

Samuel Heginbottom was born at Althill, near Ashton, on the twenty-second of December, 1756. His parents attended the Church of England; and were devout and con-

sistent christians, Early in life he was taught to fear God, and form the habit of prayer. When he grew up to manhood he began to associate with young men of loose morals. This led him into sinful courses, and he fell into the sin of drunkenness. On one occasion, after he had been drinking freely, he nearly lost his life. He had been out collecting money for his father, and the evening being very dark, he went out of the right path in crossing a moor called Brown Edge, where several pits had been made, some of which had a considerable depth of water in them. Going at the time quickly, without either thought or care, he suddenly stopped, he knew not why, and immediately heard the sound of stones falling into the water at the bottom of a deep pit. On the brink of this pit he stood, and the stones had been moved by his foot at the last step he had taken. One inch further would probably have terminated his life, and plunged him into hell. Indescribable terror came upon him; he cautiously withdrew from the frightful spot, carefully groped his steps to the highway, and on reaching it felt constrained to break out in thanksgivings to God. In the year 1783, he removed to Manchester. There he was induced to hear the preaching of the gospel among the Methodists. He felt what he heard, and was convinced of sin, of righteousness, and of judgement. In February, 1788, he obtained mercy. Being on the road from Manchester to Ashton, and walking alone, he was groaning bitterly in spirit, and praying for redemption in the blood of Christ, the forgiveness of all his sins. As he drew nigh to Ashton he was enabled to believe, his burthen was taken away, and his mourning was turned into such joy and gladness, that he scarcely knew whether he was in the body or out of the body. After this, he went about doing good, and was instrumental in turning several of his relatives from sin to holiness. Being active in his habits, and having had a little experience in building, he was appointed a trustee of various chapels; and chosen one of a committee to superintend the erection of a Wesleyan chapel in Salford. In 1797, he joined the Methodist New Connexion. Having

united with the New Connexion on principle, he laboured zealously to promote its interests. In 1802, while on his way to Chesterfield, the horse on which he rode fell with him, and rolling on its side, crushed his leg so as to oblige him to return home. He was confined to the house four months. During this time he was strongly impressed with the want of a permanent institution for the support of our aged and disabled ministers, their widows and orphan children. Not being able to shake off the impression, he set about the work in earnest; and, with the occasional assistance of Mr. Styan, he devised a plan, and drew up a set of rules for working it. Afterwards, he wrote an address containing the outlines of the plan, and called the proposed institution "The Beneficent Fund." He then introduced the project to the quarterly meeting; where it was much approved, and directed to be printed and circulated through the Connexion. It met with general approval and was unanimously adopted at the Conference, in 1803. The Connexion having been much embarrassed by the stationing of preachers having large families in circuits with limited resources, he gave this also a full and deliberate consideration, and matured a plan which he judged would provide support for the preachers' children; calling it "The Paternal Fund." The plan was submitted to the same Conference, and carried into effect. In 1812 he removed to Ashton. There, amidst serious bodily afflictions, the consolations of grace were made to abound in his experience; strengthening his faith and confirming his hope in God. He was an upright and useful member both of civil and religious society. He rendered many services to a numerous circle of relations, and to his fellow-creatures at large. Few important measures were adopted for the good of the Methodist New Connexion in which he did not participate by his advice, his co-operation, or his pecuniary aid. Six times he was a representative in Conference; once he was chosen the secretary of Conference; eight times he was a member of the Annual Committee; and six times he was treasurer of the Connexion. In 1826, the Conference was held at Ash-

ton. The occasion was a source of profit and pleasure to his mind. His heart was full of friendship and his house of hospitality. His welcome greeted the brethren when they came, and his blessing attended them when they left. At length, his constitution sunk beneath the pressure of affliction. His courage did not fail; and relying on Christ, he enjoyed an earnest of future blessedness. After lingering several weeks, in a nearly insensible state, he was called on the nineteenth of March, 1829, aged seventy-two years, into the rest of the people of God.

On the twenty-fourth of May, 1829, Scotland-street chapel Sheffield, having been rebuilt, on a commodious scale, was re-opened for the worship of God. The services were highly interesting, and the friends greatly rejoiced together on account of the wide fields of usefulness which the building of a new chapel in South-street, and the re-building of their old chapel, had opened before them.

On the twenty-seventh of July, 1829, John Henshaw exchanged earth for heaven, aged thirty-one years. He was one of four brothers, all of whom have been called by Divine Providence, to the work of the ministry, in the Methodist New Connexion. Richard and John have entered into rest; James and Robert are still beseeching men to be reconciled to God. John Henshaw, being of an amiable disposition, and grave in manner, his deep piety was seen to great advantage. He possessed strong mental powers, which were improved by diligent cultivation, and especially by thoughtful reading. His delivery was lively and impressive, and his style was perspicuous, plain, and forcible. He delighted to expatiate on a free, full, and present salvation through faith in the blood of Christ: and on the believer's knowledge of his sonship, by the *direct witness* of the Holy Spirit. In prayer, he was remarkable for humble boldness, sacred fervour, and pressing importunity. He felt and spoke like one whose habitual communion was with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He often excited the same ardent breathings in the minds of his fellow-worshippers; and led their prayers with prevalence to the

mercy-seat till they were baptized with Divine influence. Many witnesses can testify that his labours and prayers were not in vain in the Lord. At his death, the Rev. A. Lynn wrote to the Rev. David Barker, in a manner characteristic both of himself and our sainted brother, "I have been much affected by the death of Mr. Henshaw. His sweet temper, his heavenly conversation, his burning zeal, his great usefulness, with our mutual attachment, and the many happy seasons we enjoyed together, have, since his departure, rushed upon my remembrance with a soul-awakening force; which has caused me to preach more than ever for eternity. Blessed man! His aim was always at the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. He has laid down the cross and taken up the crown. He has left the blowing of the gospel trumpet for the sounding of a heavenly harp on Mount Zion above. His weakness is exchanged for strength: his pain for ease; his sickness for health; and his earthly for heavenly friends. Dear Brother, could I view thee now! How is thy soul adorned with beauty, and glory, and God."

At the Conference of 1830, the Committee of the Beneficent Fund resolved to recommend to the Society that the existing Rules be rescinded, and a new set of Rules be published in the Minutes, for the consideration of the members during the ensuing year. The next Annual Meeting of the Society carried the recommendation of the Committee into effect; and unanimously adopted the new Rules, which had been submitted for its inspection and judgement.

On the nineteenth of March, 1831, David Barker died, nearly thirty-five years of age. His death was occasioned by the falling of a coach, on the previous Saturday, while he was riding from Bolton to Manchester, where he was expected to preach on the Sabbath. The coachman was in the act of racing with another on the road, and driving at a furious rate. In consequence of losing a wheel, the coach was thrown over with a dreadful crash. Mr. Barker was sitting at the time on the front of the coach. After the fall, he reached the foot-

path without assistance, where he sank down quite exhausted. Medical aid was procured as soon as possible. On examination, it was found that one of his legs was broken in two places, the ankle severely crushed, and the foot laid completely open. After some delay, he was conveyed home, where he languished till the above date, ere his spirit left a suffering scene to dwell in a painless world. The death of this gifted and useful minister caused a great and distressing sensation throughout the New Connexion, and among an extensive circle of relatives and friends. He was no ordinary character. He combined in his person many rare and endearing qualities, and happy were they who could emphatically call him Friend. He was distinguished for decision of character, a retentive memory, a matured judgement, a mind well stored with extensive reading, gentleness of spirit, great humility, melting compassion, a ready command of thought, correctness of taste, an elegant and expressive style, and deep and earnest piety. In the New Connexion, these qualities procured for him a commanding and growing influence, of which all seemed conscious but himself. During his extreme sufferings, and though violently and suddenly torn in comparative youth, and in the midst of usefulness, from numerous endeared christian friends, and a beloved family, he possessed unshaken confidence in the Great Atonement, manifested composure and resignation highly creditable to his religious profession, and frequently expressed himself to be happy in God. An interesting memoir of him, entitled "Friendship's Memorial," has been published by the Revds. Thos. Allin and William Shuttleworth.

William Driver was born on the 28th of June, 1763, at Bromforth Cragg, in that stony and mountainous district of Yorkshire, which is called Craven. Many a bright gem has been discovered in rugged places, and many of the excellent of the earth have come from bleak and uncultivated regions. When William had acquired sufficient strength, he was trained to daily labour before he could write or even read. As he grew up, he despised the godly counsels and

example of his parents, associated with transgressors and became hardened in wickedness. After reaching manhood, he went to Middleton, near Rothwell, and laboured as a banksman at a coal mine, in its neighbourhood. At this place he resided when he was twenty-two years of age—continuing in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity. He was aroused from his carnal state by a dreadful calamity. An explosion occurred in the pit, by which ten of his fellow-workmen were driven in a moment into another world. The awful event filled his soul with amazement and horror, his sins rushed on his recollection, he saw that he too might have fallen a victim, and that had he done so, he would have sunk into the burning pit of hell. He was moved with fear; he began to relinquish sin, to work righteousness, and to seek salvation. His former companions in vice were extremely unwilling to lose their leader, and they set themselves to turn him aside from the narrow way of holiness. But their efforts were unsuccessful. The grace of God preserved him. In answer to prayer he was delivered from guilt and misery, his feet were set upon a rock, a new song was put into his mouth, and his goings were established in the path of piety. After his conversion, he obtained employment in the coal mines of Mr. Wood, of Hinley Hall, Ardsley, near Wakefield. Being a married man, with an increasing family, and having to labour hard for their support, he was not likely to make progress in literature. But when his worthy employer saw his anxiety to obtain information, he condescendingly became his instructor; taught him writing and accounts; made him acquainted with English grammar, and appointed him to manage the work in the coal mines, and to keep the accounts. He was so very industrious and expert, that he did the work which two men had formerly done, and as he did the work, he had the wages. After a while, Mr. Wood perceiving that he was a truly pious man and endued with talents that would qualify him, if cultivated, to fill a superior station, endeavoured to persuade *him* to become a clergyman, and offered to furnish him

with requisite assistance. For the kindness of Mr. Wood he felt truly grateful. But being strongly attached to the Methodists, and having imbibed principles of dissent from the Church of England, he declined the offer. Before this, he had begun to blow the gospel trumpet as a local preacher, and he continued to do so, not uncertainly, but with a clear and convincing sound. His voice was not uplifted in vain. Some of the outcasts of society, and many who were ready to perish heard the glad sound, and liberty found in the blood of the Lamb. One of the Wesleyan preachers, the Rev. Isaac Brown, was so impressed with his talents and usefulness, that he recommended him to the Conference, to go out as a circuit preacher. His being married prevented the adoption of the recommendation. In the year 1797, his attention was directed to the question of church government, by the Rev. William Bramwell, who expressed himself very strongly to Mr. Driver, in favour of a change in the Wesleyan system. At the ensuing Conference, Mr. Driver rode over to Leeds, held an interview with Mr. Bramwell, and asked him with which party he should unite, in the event of a separation. Mr. Bramwell said, in reply, that he believed he should unite with Mr. Kilham. With this answer he returned home to meditate, and wait the issue. When the Division took place, and Mr. Bramwell did not join the "New Itinerancy," Mr. Driver was greatly perplexed. In order to satisfy his mind, he opened a correspondence with some friends at Leeds. While this was going on, the friends around him began to fear that he would leave them. To prevent his doing so, the Rev. Alexander Mather requested him to take a circuit; and said that his having a family should not prevent his being called out. Soon afterwards, at the earnest and repeated request of the friends at Leeds, he consented to become a circuit preacher in the Methodist New Connexion. In 1798, several months after the Conference, he went to Huddersfield, to commence his itinerant life, in the thirty-seventh year of his age. In successive years, he laboured in Sheffield, Nottingham, Ashton, Nottingham a second

time, Manchester, Leeds, Liverpool, Chester, Hanley, Bolton, Stockport, and Liverpool a second time, till 1825, when he was superannuated. In all these circuits he was received with great joy, performed the duties of the ministry with untiring zeal, and was made abundantly useful. Being gentlemanly in appearance, direct, bold, and earnest in manner, copious and fervent in prayer, rich in resources, powerful in appeal, and full of faith and the Holy Ghost, his discourses told with amazing effect on his congregations. The Rev. Abraham Scott says they were "like showers of hail mingled with fire." Numerous were the seals to his ministry, some of whom are with him in heaven, and others are journeying thither.

He possessed the gift of prayer in a high degree; and in exercising it had, like wrestling Jacob, power with God. Many remarkable answers were vouchsafed to his prayers, relating to the recovery of the sick, and the conversion of sinners. Often, when pleading with God in the name of Jesus Christ, his sense of the all sufficiency of the Saviour led him to utter a burst of praise, exclaiming, "Immortal honours to His name." After leaving Liverpool he settled at Longton. There he raised a new class, and when sufficiently well, engaged in preaching. In 1827, he was induced to resume his labours, by taking an appointment at Doncaster. In 1828, he was re-appointed at Doncaster, and continued his labours till he was suddenly disabled. Towards the close of the year he was stricken with paralysis, and brought nigh to the grave. While in this state, he was visited by Mr. Blagborough, of Thorne, who had travelled with him twenty-four years previously, in the Ashton circuit. Mr. Blagborough found him not merely resigned to the will of God, but rejoicing with a joy unspeakable and full of glory; not only willing to die, but exulting in hope of heaven. It pleased God to recover his strength before he was taken hence. When somewhat better, he removed to Halifax, to reside with his daughter, the wife of the Rev. Simeon Woodhouse. Afterwards he settled in Hanley, and, acquiring more strength he occasionally occu-

pied the pulpit. In the early part of 1830, he was totally laid aside by another stroke of paralysis. He bore his affliction with exemplary meekness and patience. During its continuance, those graces which were but dimly seen before, kindled into a purer flame, and shone with peculiar lustre. Humility, gentleness, long-suffering and charity were brought into delightful and attractive exercise. To one who inquired respecting his spiritual welfare he said, "I am going right on towards heaven." He frequently remarked, "The Lord does all things well." It being said to him, "You will soon receive your reward." He replied, with a gush of tears, "I am a poor sinner saved by grace." Till the last, he was cheerful and happy. When less able to converse with his friends, he was often heard to exclaim, "Bless God." "Glory be to his name." A few days before his departure, he several times repeated the following verse.

" Father, in the Name, I pray,
 Of thy Incarnate Love :
 Humbly ask that, as my day,
 My suffering strength may prove.
 When my sorrows most increase,
 Let thy strongest joys be given :
 Jesus, come with my distress,
 And agony is heaven."

On the sixteenth of June, 1831, aged sixty-seven years, he entered a mansion in the skies.

The Conference of 1832, resolved on the removal of the Book-room from Hanley to Manchester, and it was removed accordingly. In January, 1833, the Third Series of the Methodist New Connexion Magazine was commenced. This interesting and useful periodical, price sixpence, had been published monthly from the beginning of the year 1798, and it was thought advisable to draw increasing attention to it, by issuing a new series, having those improvements which the removal to Manchester rendered admissible. Under the careful management of the Rev. W. Shuttleworth, the Book-room became a source of considerable advantage to our Con-

nexional funds. In 1827, when Mr. S. entered on the office of Book-steward, the capital amounted to thirteen hundred and five pounds, seventeen shillings and twopence ; and the annual profits to one hundred and thirteen pounds thirteen shillings and nine-pence. Five years after the removal of the Establishment to Manchester, the capital was two thousand five hundred pounds and the profits a little more than five hundred pounds yearly.

The year 1833, and four or five succeeding years, were distinguished by enterprise in chapel building. Spacious and noble places of worship were built at Ashton, Staley-bridge, Manchester, Macclesfield, Dewsbury, Bradford, London, Liverpool, Chester, Belfast, Newcastle, Gateshead, Oldbury, Tipton, Pensnett, Stourbridge, Yarmouth, Mossley, and Halifax. Praiseworthy liberality was manifested in connexion with every one of these erections, but the most imposing instances were those of Mossley and Halifax. Towards the erection of Mossley Chapel, fourteen hundred pounds were obtained in subscriptions ; and four hundred pounds additional, were contributed at the opening services. Towards the erection of Hanover-street chapel Halifax, (a chapel in addition to Salem,) one thousand and seventy pounds, in subscriptions, and six hundred and three pounds, eight shillings, at the opening services. Besides the above-named, many smaller, yet good chapels, were built in various parts of the Connexion. During the same period, new fields of labour were entered ; in Shrewsbury, by the Rev. P. T. Gilton ; in Truro, by the Rev. P. J. Wright ; and in Guernsey by the Rev. W. Cooke ; where excellent chapels have been erected, and encouraging societies established.

At the close of the ensuing seven years, the increase of members, in the Connexion, was seven thousand and fifty-two ; namely, from fourteen thousand, seven hundred and eighty-four, in the year 1833, to twenty-one thousand, eight hundred and thirty-six, in the year 1840.

At the Conference of 1834, the copious and valuable Hymn Book, now in use throughout the Connexion, having been compiled, by a committee, from the Wesleyan Hymn book,

our own Appendix, and other sources, was ordered to be printed and introduced into the circuits.

Joseph Manners, was born in Sheffield, on the twenty-ninth of August, 1769. While a youth, he was remarkably venturesome in his sports; and on several occasions he endangered his life, not escaping without serious injuries. When about fifteen years of age, he began to attend the Methodist chapel; and sat under the instructive and impressive ministry of the Rev. Joseph Benson. Under Mr. Benson's preaching he was convinced of his sinfulness, his soul was exceedingly troubled, and his anxiety became unspeakable. His solicitude and terror were increased by alarming dreams. The solemn truths which he heard, took such hold on his mind, that, waking or sleeping, they ruled and awed his thoughts. He dreamed that the Day of Judgement was come; that the general conflagration had commenced; and that he was unprepared for the event. He fled to seek a place of refuge; the flames pursued him; and eternal ruin seemed to have overtaken him. He was convulsed with horror and awoke. He had several dreams of this description, and the impression they left upon his mind was very salutary. In his seventeenth year, he began to cultivate a taste for reading. Unhappily, he selected novels for perusal. These works produced an awful effect on his mind; obstructing the holy change which had begun there, and almost entirely extinguishing solicitude for his eternal welfare. So bewitching were they, it was with great difficulty he could abandon them, even after he saw the reading of them to be wrong: but he made one grand effort and cast them aside for ever. In his nineteenth year, anxiety about religion again arose in his soul, and he firmly resolved to devote himself to the service of God. On hearing a discourse on the advantages of a religious life, and of communion with the people of God, he determined to become a member of the Methodist society. He did so, and found his class-meeting exceedingly profitable. He could not tell at what moment, nor in what day he obtained the forgiveness of sins, and adoption into the family of God. The

blessed work was effected gradually. At length, he happily found, that he had passed from death unto life, and from a state of restlessness and fear, to one of peaceful confidence. His comfort came not as a sudden flood, but sprung up gently in his soul. He felt reconciled to God, and went on his way with steadfast step towards the kingdom of heaven. After becoming established in grace, he endeavoured to be useful as a prayer-leader ; he gave attendance to reading, and he began to write down the useful thoughts of others, and to add those of his own. On entering the marriage state, he commenced domestic worship. To him, this exercise was at once a duty and a delight, and he could not imagine how religion could live and flourish in a family where it was neglected. In the year 1796, he made an attempt to preach. He had various experience in preaching, till he preached his trial sermon ; when he succeeded so indifferently that he was received in a hesitating manner. In 1797, he examined the controversy then going on respecting church-government, and being satisfied that the principles set forth by Mr. Kilham were reasonable and scriptural, he united himself with the New Connexion. Having done this, he pursued his wonted labours, praying and preaching with a single eye to the glory of God, and an earnest desire to save souls. His brethren judging favourably of his piety and talents, urged him to go out, and discharge the duties of a circuit preacher. His wife objecting, he considered it his duty not to take so serious a step without her approval. After a time, her scruples were overcome, and he left Sheffield in the year 1802, to enter on his first appointment at Hull. He commenced his labours with a deep conviction of his own insufficiency and took for his text, "Who is sufficient for these things." As soon as he had read these words he was overwhelmed with a consciousness of the awful position in which he stood as an ambassador of Christ, having to beseech men to be reconciled to God. His voice failed, his knees smote one against another, and he was obliged to sit down in the pulpit and remain some time in silence. At length he arose, and spoke with such solemnity

and power, that every heart was moved and every face bedewed with tears. When his work in Hull was finished, he went to Manchester, and subsequently to Huddersfield, Newcastle, North Shields, Halifax, Nottingham, Ashton, Liverpool, North Shields a second time, Newcastle a second time, Barnsley, Hanley, Stockport, Dewsbury, Thorne, Ashton a second time, and Derby.

As a minister of Christ and an overseer of the church, he enjoyed a high reputation throughout the Connexion. He had invaluable pulpit qualifications; and a wonderful aptness for regulating Methodistic affairs. He was truly regenerate in heart; and in his department, he adorned the doctrines of the gospel in all things. His mind was so well regulated that he was never known to be wrathful either in his own family, or in other company. In deliberative assemblies he always preserved his temper through the most unpleasant discussions; sitting with patience while others declared their views, and then calmly reasoning in favour of his own sentiments. He was full of pity for the afflicted and the poor; and rendered them not only sympathy but liberal pecuniary assistance. He manifested strong solicitude for the welfare of the young; visiting the Sabbath schools, to encourage the teachers, and address the children. For the instruction of Sabbath scholars, he published twelve interesting lectures; and for the guidance of the youthful, he published two works, one entitled, "The Mental Pole Star;" the other, "The Family Portrait." His reading was extensive, his meditation incessant, and the writings he left on various religious topics, most of them in a state of readiness for publication, showed that he must have spent a considerable portion of every day in composition. His habits of reading, reflection, and writing, gave such copiousness and variety to his ministrations, that his congregations listened to them with greater satisfaction towards the end of two or three years, than they did even during the novelty and freshness of their commencement. His removal from the church militant to the church triumphant was peculiarly sudden. On the 21st of December, 1834, he preached in

our chapel at Derby, in a most impressive manner. On his return home after the evening service, he seemed quite cheerful; and observing to his daughter that it was her mother's birthday, made some remarks on its having been a happy day. When praying with his family, before retiring to rest, he did not forget one relative, but prayed for all with his usual earnestness. After he had slept a short time, he awoke at about eleven o'clock, coughing and complaining to Mrs. Manners that he could not breathe. Mrs. Manners gave him a little medicine, which had been prepared for his cough, raised him in bed, and supported him with pillows. He then said, "Get a light, I am dying." Mrs. Manners replied, "Don't say so. Shall I call our neighbours?" He said "Yes." She went and called them. On her return he said, "Lay me down," and instantly fell asleep in Jesus, aged sixty-five years. So died this honoured and useful minister of Jesus Christ.

"His body with his charge laid down
And ceased at once to work and live."

Sudden death, to him, was sudden glory.

William Black was born at Malone, near Belfast, Ireland. In early life he was made the subject of religious impressions, but they soon passed away. While an apprentice, he was alarmed by an awful dream. He thought the Day of Judgement was come, and that fire and brimstone were descending on the earth. Being in Belfast, he imagined that he ran to the sea to preserve himself from the violence of the fire, but to his great disappointment the sea was congealed, and he stood exposed to the devouring element—when he awoke. In 1764, he first heard the Methodists. He went from curiosity; two soldiers having to conduct the service: he left, convinced of sin. He entered the narrow path and walked therein, till turned aside by evil example. Having seen two clergymen of the Establishment going to a ball, he thought he would not do wrong were he to visit a similar scene. Shortly after, he was invited to a dance; he went, and returned in the morning singing vile songs. His companions said, "we shall

have done with his praying now," and they mocked each other. In 1766, he married the daughter of Mr. Hanse Cumberland, of Lisburn, at whose house the Methodist preachers were entertained. There he had the privilege of their ministry. In a little while, he was led thereby to the Lord Jesus Christ, and made a subject of his power to save. In 1767, he had the honour of entertaining the venerable Wesley. Mr. Wesley preached in the area of the Linen Hall. Afterwards he administered the sacrament to about fifty persons; nearly all the Methodists at that time in the counties of Down and Antrim. Mr. Black was one of the number, and felt Christ precious to a degree he had never before experienced. The leader of the class in Lisburn, was the clerk of Deriagh Church, and being deprived of his office because he was a Methodist, he went to England. During his absence, Mr. Black led the class, he and thirteen females constituting the society at Lisburn, and for two years he was the only man who joined them. On the return of the former leader, they began to hold prayer meetings. By means of these prayer meetings, two classes were raised, three leaders arose from the classes, and fourteen members died rejoicing in God. On one occasion, Mr. Black went to Armagh, distant twenty-five Irish miles, to hear Mr. Wesley preach. Mr. Wesley read for his text, "In the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are as the angels of God in heaven." When he 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, he could not proceed, he burst into tears and said, "Let us pray." An overwhelming influence fell upon the assembly. Mr. Black was a warm advocate for missionary labours. He assisted in sending a missionary from the Lisburn society to Coleraine, and he prayed fervently with others for his success. In answer to prayer a flourishing society was raised up to serve the Lord, and one of the converts was the celebrated Adam Clarke. Mr. Black continued a steady, zealous, and useful member of the Wesleyan Connexion till 1798. At

that time, thirty-two stewards and leaders of the Lisburn society — Mr. Black being one — sent a memorial to the Wesleyan Conference, held in Dublin, entreating that lay-representatives might be introduced into the District Meetings and the Conference. The reply of the Conference declares their request to be “founded on the principles of Jacobinism,” and states, “we are determined in the most resolved manner, and with the most unanimous spirit, to reject the plan of delegates in whatever shape or manner it may be proposed.” It also announces their expulsion from the body in these terms. “We can on no account have any further connexion with you.” This reply was signed by Dr. Coke, although three years previously he had advocated their principles in a letter to Mr. Kilham. When these good men were thus unrighteously expelled from the Wesleyan Connexion, Ireland was in a very disturbed state. Advantage was taken of this circumstance, in a manner which Mr. Black could not advert to, even after the lapse of many years, without weeping. After their expulsion, their old friends looked upon them with a jealous eye, because they met and held prayer meetings. In truth, they were bitter against them. On account of the rebellion, soldiery were encamped on Blair’s Moor, near Lisburn, and any persons convicted of disloyalty were either shot, or hanged and beheaded, as examples to others. Some one furnished a list of their names, thirty-two stewards and leaders, to the General of the King’s army, stating that they held secret meetings, were rebels against the state, Jacobins in principle, and not fit to live. The General while riding with Lieutenant Coulson, of Lisburn, on the road to Belfast, showed him the letter, and inquired of him concerning the parties mentioned therein. The Lieutenant, on looking at the document, said he knew all of them, 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 Lieutenant Coulson, who showed it to Mr. Black and his friends. Thus they were saved by Providence, from unmerited suspicion, and, perhaps,

from an untimely and disgraceful end. On forming a new society, they called out Mr. John M'Clure, as their first preacher, and shortly afterwards joined the Methodist New Connexion, in England. Mr. Black took an active part in these proceedings, and he often referred to them with pleasure. To the New Connexion he continued an ornament and a blessing, until he obtained a crown of life. His life exhibited religion in so pleasing a light as to make it admired, even by its enemies. He related his experience in a glowing and affecting strain, and it often proved beneficial to others. His exhortations and prayers were eloquent and impressive. His faith in Providence was exceedingly strong. At one period of his life trade was bad, and he could not support his family. One Saturday night, he had no money, no food, and the last candle was burning near the socket. His wife inquired what was to be done for the Sabbath. He proposed prayer. While they were praying, a knock was heard at the door. When he opened it, a man gave him a parcel, sent by his master, in which he found ten guineas. He wished to know the name of the donor, but the man said his master had directed him not to mention it. He gave the money to his wife, who burst into tears. They fell on their knees and gave thanks unto God. The gentleness of his mind, and the sweetness of his disposition were remarkable. He seemed to have learned the art of being always happy. His appearance was highly interesting. His silvery locks, furrowed cheeks, bent shoulders, weeping eyes, and joyful tones, as he leaned on his staff and spoke of his hope of glory, were characteristic of an aged pious pilgrim. He often ascended Pisgah, to contemplate heaven, and hold communion with Christ and with God. A short time before he died, he said, "I believe! Yes! Glory be to God, I do! Then heaven is mine! Angels beckon me away, and Jesus bids me come! I shall not perish, but have everlasting life — everlasting life!" At his death, he had been seventy years in fellowship with the Methodists, and sixty-eight a class leader among them. His faculties were but slightly impaired,

and "his eye was not dim," for he could read the smallest print without glasses. On the fourth of February, 1836, aged ninety years, he departed from earth to dwell with patriarchs, apostles, and martyrs, in the heaven of heavens.

The Conference of 1835, directed a condensed Trust Deed to be prepared and printed, with marginal references, in order to lessen the expense of placing our chapels on trust. The same Conference enlarged the Annual Committee, from five to seven members.

In the year 1836, a goodly number of most excellent individuals, in Dudley and its neighbourhood, who had seceded from the Old Connexion, with the parties that constitute the Wesleyan Association, but preferred becoming members of the New Connexion, were formally received at an interesting meeting, held for the purpose, into union with our Community. Subsequent events have fully justified the steps that were taken by the Wesleyan seceders on the one hand, and the New Connexion on the other. Commodious chapels have been built, many souls have been converted to God, and in the two circuits, Dudley and Stourbridge, six circuit preachers are employed, having under their pastoral care, twenty-five societies, containing seventeen hundred and fifty-two members.

At the Conference of 1837, the question of union with the Wesleyan Association, a large body of seceders from the Parent Community, under the leadership of Dr. Warren and Mr. Eckett, was anxiously discussed. Liberal overtures were made to the parties by the New Connexion, with the hope of preventing the unseemly spectacle, of a further increase of Methodist sects; but the union was rendered impossible by the extreme nature of their demands. Not content with our plan of lay-representation, involving the exercise by the people, of equal power with the preachers, in managing the affairs of the Community — modified to a certain extent to meet their wishes — they sought to revolutionize our whole system. To this, the New Connexion could not, with honor and safety, consent. Each of the Bodies, therefore, was left to pursue its own course. That

of the Wesleyan Association, has been, until very recently, far from prosperous; and the New Connexion, has seen it abandon its theories in a large degree, and adopt in practice, many of the arrangements, which it had required the New Connexion to relinquish, ere it would consent to act on the axiom, "union is strength."

The same Conference, determined to open a Mission in Canada, and appointed the Rev. John Addyman, to enter on this important and arduous undertaking. Attention had been directed to Canada, as a suitable field for missionary operations, by various circumstances. In the year 1820, our benevolent friend Mr. William Ridgway, being on a visit to Canada, was deeply impressed with its claims, on the sympathy of British Christians. Some time afterwards, Mr. Nall, one of our circuit preachers, having relinquished the ministry in England, was induced — partly by the spiritual necessities of the inhabitants — to settle in Canada. In 1832, Mr. Joseph Clementson, one of our Hanley friends, being at Toronto, on business, found the inhabitants of the surrounding country, extremely destitute of religious ordinances; and a paucity of preachers in the town, laid him under constraint to preach to a congregation himself, during his sojourn there. Lastly, enlightened and affecting reports, had been recently published by the Independents and the Baptists, respecting the religious requirements of the province. Doubtless our steps thitherward, were directed by Providence. Happily, Mr. William Ridgway was called to America, soon after Mr. Addyman's arrival there, and rendered him valuable aid, in selecting a suitable sphere of labour. Two years subsequently, the Rev. Henry Only Crofts, was sent to assist Mr. Addyman. At the close of two years more, a Body of Methodists in Canada, having a system of government like our own, became part of the New Connexion. Mr. Wm. Ridgway, being again in America, attended the Canadian Conference; and by his counsels, contributed largely to settle the union on a satisfactory basis. This event opened a fine field of usefulness, which has been diligently and successfully cultivated. The results, at the

Jubilee Conference were three thousand, four hundred and sixty members, and forty missionaries in active service.

At the Conference of 1838, the General Rules were again revised and enlarged; and directed to be printed as they now exist, for the government of the Connexion. The Conference of 1839, made several alterations in the provisions of the Book-room Trust; and directed a new Trust Deed to be formed, embodying the same.

William Haslam, was born near Bolton, in the year 1767. His parents were farmers, and his not very remote ancestors, were the owners of considerable property. In early life, he cherished the love of books and retirement; and he often strolled into the fields, to indulge in lonely musings, on the works of God. Divine grace manifested itself in his character when very young, and he was distinguished for sedateness, intelligence, and correct conduct. When about sixteen years of age, he was led by the Spirit of God, to hear the Methodists. There was something singular in this circumstance, for no one invited him; he had been accustomed to attend the Church of England, and his master had been trying without success, to convert him to Calvinism. After hearing the gospel a few times, he went to a prayer meeting; there some one put a hymn book into his hand, and requested him to give out a hymn. He complied, but while doing so, his knees smote together. Afterwards he went to a class meeting, and beginning to learn the way of salvation more perfectly, he gave himself to prayer, for the blessings of forgiveness and the new birth. He found peace while engaged in his daily employment; and the effect was such that his heart was filled with gratitude and heaven. He never forgot that day. Through life he held it sacred to the Lord, making it a day of special thanksgiving and prayer.

He continued diligent in the use of the means of grace; sometimes walking several miles to hear Mr. Wesley and others preach at five o'clock in the morning. Before long, he felt a desire to preach the gospel. This desire he resisted until he became unspeakably miserable. After a

time, the snare was broken, and he went forth to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ. The fact that he had become a local preacher, reaching the ears of his fellow workmen, they began to deride him, and with scornful laughter called him, "a parson." On one occasion they resolved to make him preach a sermon to them. Seeing they were resolute, he agreed to do so, on condition that they would be quiet during the progress of his discourse, and reserve their mockery till its close. A rough pulpit was soon constructed, and they gathered before him, about twenty in number, with sneering looks, as he stood up to announce his text. Nothing daunted, he read aloud, with great seriousness, the following words, from the third verse of the twenty-first chapter of Job: "Suffer me that I may speak; and after that I have spoken, mock on." His sermon was so truthful and weighty, that they retired when he had done, conscience stricken and in silence, to their work; and never after moved their lips against him. In subsequent years he visited three of them in their dying moments, and had the pleasure of hearing them state, that their conversion to God, was owing to the sermon he delivered under such singular circumstances. After the death of Mr. Wesley, he took an active part with others in seeking a change in the church government of Wesleyanism; and attended what was called the "Open Conference;" when Mr. Thompson, the President, disappointed the expectation of those who were looking for a liberal constitution, by stating that the preachers had resolved to rule the connexion as Mr. Wesley had ruled it. In 1797, he commenced his labours as one of the "New Itinerancy," in his native town. Subsequently, he laboured in Liverpool, Hanley, Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Halifax, Manchester, Newcastle, North Shields, Dewsbury, Nottingham a second time, London, Hanley a second time, Ashton, Hull, Sheffield a second time, and Huddersfield. At the Sheffield Conference, in 1830, he was superannuated. At the time he was called out as a circuit preacher in the New Connexion, a cataract was forming over each of his eyes; and as it was doubtful

whether his sight would continue, he disinterestedly engaged to release the Connexion from every obligation beyond the payment of twenty pounds, in the event of his being afflicted with blindness. At a later period, when the mournful event seemed likely to take place, the Conference cancelled the engagement, as generously as it had been made. Afterwards, by the blessing of Providence on a delicate and difficult operation, the sight of one of his eyes was perfectly restored, and continued good even in old age. When Mr. Kilham died, and dismay took hold of the hearts of many, his courage did not fail. Though filled with grief, he calmly said, "while another will stand with me, I will stand by the New Connexion." In many an emergency did his cheerfulness soothe, his counsel guide, and his example stimulate the friends of the Connexion. Difficulties produced in him neither discontent nor fear. The unfaithfulness of others never moved him from his steadfast course. The firm and noble spirit he ever displayed is beyond all praise. If there was a forlorn hope, Mr. Haslam was generally selected to take charge of it. He went to Leeds, under very trying circumstances, but having found refreshment at the "pilgrim's inn" — the residence of Mr. Christopher Heaps — he set himself deliberately to work, and by his prudence and energy, brought the circuit into a satisfactory state. In London, when the trustees of the chapel were dealt harshly with by certain claimants, highly as he valued his library, without consulting any one, he quietly made arrangements to sell it; in order to extricate them. Happily, his generous purpose was overruled by Providence. While in North Shields, he was twice rescued from a watery grave. In crossing the river to South Shields, in an open boat, through the unskilfulness of the boatmen, he was plunged into the water: once, before evening, and once, on a dark night. In the goodness of God, he was saved each time, with difficulty, by means of a rope. Great was his gratitude for the preserving care of his Heavenly Father. In the pulpit, Mr. Haslam was serious without affectation; somewhat quaint, fond of quoting old writers, and

highly instructive and edifying. In social life, he was singularly cheerful; and ever ready, from his ample stores of anecdote and information, to communicate pleasure and knowledge to those around him. At home, he was considerate, kind, and devout: a pattern of affection and piety. In all the relations he held to others, his uprightness was exemplary. He acted on principle; and won, thereby, general esteem and confidence. After ceasing to take a circuit, he settled in Sheffield; maintaining the same singleness of purpose which had before so honourably distinguished him; and labouring, as strength would allow, to promote the prosperity of Zion. In 1831, he went to London, for a few months, at the request of the Annual Committee; to watch over and encourage our friends there, amidst troublesome circumstances. In 1832 and 1833, he visited various circuits, and obtained subscriptions towards the erection of a new chapel in London. In 1835, he removed to Hanley, where he continued to adorn the gospel of Jesus Christ. In 1836, he was appointed one of the members of a committee to revise the Rules of the Connexion. While attending to this duty, he was heard to remark that there was not a rule in the then existing collection of rules which he had not assisted in making, and prayed over. About eight weeks before his death, he attended the morning service at Bethesda Chapel; on returning home, he was so affected with difficulty of breathing, as to be compelled to remain for some hours, in much pain, at the residence of a friend. From that time, he was almost entirely confined to his own house. During his illness, he suffered much in body, but he was joyful in spirit. To his old and valued friend, Mr. Yearsley, he said, "All is right: Christ is mine. His promises are mine. His salvation is mine. All that He has is mine." On Sunday, December the twenty-eighth, 1839, the Rev. Samuel Hulme went to see him. God had graciously mitigated his sufferings, and when speaking of his trust in Christ and hope of heaven, he raised his voice to a tone of triumph, exclaiming, "Glory, glory, glory. The work is done. The work is done. He comes — he

comes — he comes to raise me from the earth. I am happy. I am happy. I am happy." About seven o'clock in the evening, the enemy was permitted to assault him. The conflict was severe, and he was heard saying, "There is a heavy storm in this valley, but God is with me." About eight o'clock, he requested prayer to be made, and joined fervently in the exercise. At its close, he said, "Thank God. Thank God. It is enough. It is enough." On Monday, the twenty-ninth of December, 1839, aged seventy-two years, without a word and without a sigh — with holy quietude, he ceased to breathe, and his soul was at home with God.

Additional biographical sketches to those which interperse this chapter, might easily be given, but limited space will not allow us to furnish them. Nothing further is admissible here, than a simple record of names of departed preachers, the perusal of which will awaken many solemn and tender recollections. The following list includes the whole of our deceased ministers, not in the order in which they died, but in which they commenced their labours in the Connexion: *In England* — Alexander Kilham, William Thom, John Grundell, James Mort, John Revill, William Haslam, William Styan, Charles Donald, William Driver, Peter Robey, William Price, Joseph Manners, Benjamin Blagborough, Thomas Boshier, Samuel Barrowclough, James Parry, Abraham Jackson, William Robinson Wood, Charles Raby, Abraham Haigh, Francis Newbery, John Atherton, James Dunkerly, James Ousey, Richard Henshaw, Joseph Brough, James Tittensor, David Barker, Thomas Batty, John Henshaw, Thomas Robinson, Joseph Shone, William Fishwick, who was drowned while bathing in the river Trent, Henry Seals, George Shaw, Henry Cowell, William Milner, Hamer Dawson, Thomas Taylor Coxon, Alfred Bywater, William Campbell, and Jonathan Tate. *In Ireland* — John M'Clure, Richard Johnston, Alexander Donaldson, George Frost, George Carlisle, and William M'Clune. *In Canada* — Edward Bailey, Gore Atkin Bell, who was killed by a flash of lightning, Owen Campbell, and James Jolliff.

On the sixth of December, 1840, a spacious chapel, of the Gothic style, was opened for divine worship in Duckinfield, near Ashton, by the Revds. T. Allin and W. Cooke. The collections, with the profits of a tea meeting, amounted to one hundred and sixty pounds, and the previous subscriptions to nine hundred pounds; towards which, one hundred was contributed by C. Hindley, Esq., M.P. The dimensions of the chapel are fifty-one feet wide and eighty-one feet long, and connected with the premises there are three thousand and eighty square yards of burial ground. Since the opening, the remaining debt has been considerably reduced.

The Conference of 1841, expelled a person from our ministry for unsoundness in doctrine, who had come amongst us from the Wesleyans, and who has since made himself notorious by impudent eccentricities, and the advocacy of low Socinianism. By various dishonourable devices, this individual, during the time he moved through our community, as a "wolf in sheep's clothing," obtained a large measure of popularity. This, combined with hypocrisy and falsehood, enabled him on his expulsion to agitate our societies in an alarming manner. Numbers in various circuits were incited to leave us, most of whom have since discovered, with shame and regret, that they left the Light of Truth to follow the glare of a wandering star. These events occasioned much trouble and loss to the Connexion; but God was with us, and by his blessing on our prayers, liberality, and zeal, tranquillity was restored, and the breaches that had been made, gradually repaired. Those who wish to obtain a perfect knowledge of the controversy will find ample information in "The Beacon," a work published at the time by ministers of the New Connexion; and in various tracts by the Rev. W. Cooke.

Amidst the troubles just adverted to, a noble chapel was built by our friends in Longton. At the Division in 1797, the New Connexion in Longton consisted of the small number of thirteen members, without a place of worship. Our now, venerable friend, Mr. Wm. Bailey, opened his house

for preaching till a chapel could be obtained. In 1798, a chapel was erected. Through inexperience, the site and the plan chosen for the erection were both unhappy, which led Mr. Grundell, the blind preacher, to remark, "They have done nothing right which they could do wrong. It is the awkwardest place I ever *saw*." The congregation in the new chapel was very small, it did not increase, and the prospect was gloomy. In 1802, our friends established a Sabbath School, and there being no other in the town, public attention was drawn towards it. The school soon became numerous and respectable, and it still retains its pre-eminence. By means of the school, the congregation and society began to increase, and in 1803, a larger chapel was built in a better situation. This chapel was called Zion, and it was opened in 1804. The last sermon preached in the first chapel was from the words. "Arise, let us go up to Zion." Ere long the congregation in Zion grew large, and accessions were gradually made to the society. In the year 1812, it was found necessary to enlarge the chapel by adding six yards to its length. It was re-opened by the Rev. S. Woodhouse. In 1822, the chapel was a second time enlarged. In 1840, the chapel being usually full on Sabbath morning, and in the evening crowded to excess, meetings were held, and it was determined to pull it down and erect a spacious building. Mr. Bailey put down two hundred pounds, Mr. Batkin, one hundred, Mr. G. L. Robinson, one hundred, others fifty, thirty, &c., till about eight hundred pounds were promised. In due time a commanding edifice, fifty-seven feet wide, and eighty-seven feet long, with an orchestra in addition nine feet long, was ready for the use of the congregation. At the opening service, on the morning of February twentieth, 1842, Mr. and Mrs. Hilditch had their infant daughter baptized by the Rev. W. Baggaly. Sermons were preached, at the various services on the occasion, by the Revds. J. Bakewell, T. Allin, and Dr. Raffles, and by the Revds. W. Ford, S. Hulme, and Dr. Reed. The collections amounted to two hundred and fifty-four pounds ten shillings. Liberal efforts are now

being made to pay off one thousand eight hundred pounds of the debt remaining on the estate.

Previous to the Conference of 1842, the sum of eight hundred and ninety-eight pounds, three shillings, and fourpence was contributed by the preachers and by various friends in the Connexion, to assist in making good the deficiencies occasioned by recent events in the Connexion. During the ensuing year an additional sum of eight hundred and forty pounds, two shillings was raised for the same purpose.

At the Conference of 1843, our Leeds friends presented three hundred pounds to the Mission Fund, being the proceeds of a Bazaar held to assist in relieving it, and our friends at Batley presented forty pounds raised in a similar manner. Before the close of the sittings of Conference, one thousand pounds were subscribed by the preachers and representatives, towards the removal of our Connexional debts, and it was resolved to make an effort throughout the Connexion, to accomplish this important object. During the year, the effort was made, and the handsome sum of five thousand pounds was obtained and sent to the next Conference.

At the Conference of 1844, the constitution of District Meetings — which had been held for a few years in the Connexion, and found useful — was definitively settled, and their functions clearly set forth.

The same Conference, after receiving full information respecting the advantages of such a step, resolved on the removal of the Book-room to London. The removal was effected without delay. Under the skilful editorship of the Rev. John Bakewell, the Magazine became increasingly popular, and it has been enlarged from forty to forty-eight pages without additional charge, it being still sold at sixpence. The price of the Sunday Scholars' Magazine has been reduced to one penny, which has led to a considerable extension of its sale. The profits of the Book-room for the year ending at the Jubilee Conference, amounted to the sum of six hundred pounds. The present editor of our *Magazines* is the Rev. William Cooke.

Before the close of the year, a new Form for the Renewal of the Covenant was prepared by the Revds. S. Woodhouse, and J. Bakewell, under the direction of Conference, submitted to the judgement of the Annual Committee, and brought into use in the Connexion.

In the early part of 1845, a noble effort to reduce the debt on Salem Chapel, Halifax, was joyfully completed. A few months previously, the burial ground had been enlarged by the purchase of two thousand, six hundred yards of a field, into which it opens. This circumstance increasing the pecuniary pressure on the estate, our liberal friend Jonathan Akroyd, Esq., set his heart on its removal. In a quiet manner, highly characteristic of himself, he stated to the Rev. P. J. Wright, that he would give a subscription equal to the sum contributed by all the other trustees and friends. A subscription list was speedily opened. Thomas Hughes, Esq., put down one hundred and fifty pounds; Mr. Styring, one hundred pounds; Mr. Leyland, one hundred pounds; and others a variety of liberal sums. At length, the amount raised was, eleven hundred and sixty-five pounds; which, being doubled by the munificent subscription of Mr. Akroyd, the estate was relieved to the extent of two thousand, three hundred and thirty pounds. Nor did the benefit rest here: friends in different parts of the Connexion were stimulated by this exciting example to make similar exertions, and the movement is likely to go forward, till all our chapels are in easy circumstances.

At the Conference of 1845, arrangements were made for conducting the operations of the Chapel fund, by its Committee, on a larger scale. At various periods of our history, efforts had been put forth to establish an effective Fund for the relief of chapels; but every effort had been unsuccessful. In 1840, the attempt was renewed, and through the blessing of Providence, on the judicious and indefatigable exertions of the Rev. Wm. Ford, a fund was gradually formed, and proceedings were conducted, which bid fair to render invaluable relief to the chapel property of the Connexion. This was the state of the business in 1845; and it being found that the contributions from the circuits were steadily

increasing, it was resolved to obtain a loan of two thousand five hundred pounds, to be expended on the speedy and effectual reduction of the debts on our chapels. The expenditure was settled on the following plan. Engagements to pay — with due consideration of the circumstances of every case — a certain sum from the Fund, were to be made, on condition of the trustees raising an equal, or a larger sum, as the Committee might determine. The interest on the loan, and a portion of the principal, to be paid from the annual income of the Chapel Fund, till the whole is liquidated. This plan was carried into effect; and being subsequently aided by the payment of an instalment of one thousand, six hundred pounds, from the Jubilee Fund, and certain prospective arrangements, chapel debts are in progress of liquidation to the amount of thirty thousand pounds. Amongst the cases already relieved, the most pressing was that of Pepper-street Chapel, Chester; the debt on which, has been reduced one thousand pounds. And the most interesting, that of Wesley Chapel, Dudley, a commodious and very beautiful structure, which having been legally conveyed to our friends by the Wesleyan Conference, and settled on trust, according to our Model Deed, has had its debt reduced thirteen-hundred and fifty pounds.

On the fourteenth of May, 1846, a new chapel, of chaste and elegant appearance, was opened in Sunderland, by the Rev. S. Hulme. The erection of this edifice for the use of the New Connexion, has been brought to pass, mainly, by the earnest and persevering exertions of our attached friend, Mr. Hardy.

On the first of June, 1846, our Jubilee Conference commenced its sittings, in Manchester. The Rev. T. Allin was elected President, and Mr. John Robinson, of Liverpool, Secretary.

The "Deed Poll" of the Connexion, having been previously submitted to the judgement of the circuits, was placed before the Conference in a revised and complete form; and, after careful deliberation, received and adopted. By the Deed of Declaration, a legal identity is given to the Con-

nexion, in the persons of twenty-four Guardian Representatives, twelve Ministers and twelve Laymen ; whose names are inserted therein, with provisions for filling up the vacancies that will necessarily occur. The attendance of six of the Guardian Representatives is requisite to legalize the Conference. Subsequently to its adoption, the " Deed Poll" was executed by every member of the Conference ; and it has since been duly enrolled in the High Court of Chancery. A Model Trust Deed and a Form of Conveyance of Freehold for the settlement of other Chapels on the same trusts by reference to the Model Deed, were also presented to the Conference. Being approved, the Chapel Committee were directed to complete them by the advice of Counsel, carry them into effect, and publish copies thereof for the use of the Connexion. This has been done.

The Methodist New Connexion, at its Jubilee Conference had twenty thousand and two members ; being in relation to the returns of the previous year ; in England, an increase of two hundred and twenty-eight ; in Ireland, a decrease of fifty-two ; in Canada, an increase of one hundred and sixty. The above number stands thus, in the Minutes : England, fifteen thousand, six hundred and ten ; Ireland, nine hundred and thirty-two ; Canada, three thousand, four hundred and sixty. All the Funds were found in an improving state.

With respect to the Jubilee, the following resolution was passed. " That this Conference cordially enters into the views, expressed by the last Conference, on the desirableness of a suitable commemoration of our Connexional Jubilee ; and feels it to be the duty of the Connexion, gratefully to celebrate, the Fiftieth year of its existence, by the establishment of some valuable Institutions, for the benefit of the Community, and by assisting those of our present Funds which require help. The Conference, therefore determines, in dependence on the Divine blessing, and on the liberal co-operation of the people, heartily and devotedly to enter upon this work, and to raise not less than twenty thousand pounds ; to be called the Jubilee Fund."

The objects to be accomplished by the Jubilee Fund, and the sums to be appropriated for each, were subsequently and finally settled, as follows:—Relief of distressed chapels, eight thousand pounds; Preparatory Institution for circuit preachers and missionaries, six thousand pounds; Home Mission, two thousand pounds; Canadian and Irish Mission, one thousand pounds; Foreign Mission, one thousand pounds; Aged and retired ministers, two thousand pounds.

On Friday afternoon, June the fifth, the Jubilee tea party was held in the Free Trade Hall, where attentive thousands had so often heard with enthusiasm, the convincing speeches of Richard Cobden. Mr. J. H. Roby, of the Athenæum, by the direction of the Manchester committee, prepared as follows, for the immense assemblage:—one thousand pounds of currant bread; one thousand pounds of plain bread; one hundred and thirty pounds of butter; fifty pounds of tea; three hundred pounds of coffee; forty-seven gallons of cream; and three hundred pounds of lump sugar. At least, four thousand persons were present, from various towns in Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cheshire, Staffordshire, and elsewhere. The vast company, animated with holy joy, presented a magnificent and gratifying spectacle. After tea, the two hundred and ninth hymn was sung. At the close of the singing, the Rev. Thomas Waterhouse, engaged in prayer, with extraordinary fluency, appropriateness, and power. John Ridgway, Esq. being called to the chair, opened the speaking, with frank and hearty earnestness. His address was most happy and effective. Amongst other things, he said, — “ My Friends. It is the year of our Connexional Jubilee, and we do well to rejoice together. To unfold the origin of our beloved Connexion, is assigned to abler hands than mine. All I can say is, we might be in advance of the intelligence of the times, but we were not in advance of the truth. It was on that foundation we built, and it is on that foundation we rest this day. I perfectly well recollect, sitting at the feet of that great and good man, the Rev. Alexander Kilham, when he explained his views of church government, and carried conviction to all who heard.

him. And I well remember, how my youthful feelings were impressed with his generous sentiments, and how I resolved to make them the rule of my life. It was my happiness to choose these sentiments, and join with God's people in early life. It has preserved me from a thousand snares, procured to me unmerited honor, and placed me in the path of usefulness. And now, through your favor. I have the distinction conferred upon me, of presiding at our welcome Jubilee." The Rev. William Ford, delivered a serious and judicious speech, in the course of which, he remarked, — "In the year 1725, the Wesleys commenced their career of pious and benevolent effort, which has led to such extraordinary results. Through their instrumentality, and that of their helpers and successors, hundreds and thousands of immortal souls, have been savingly converted to God; and societies or churches, whose members have become actual partakers of gospel enjoyments, have been formed throughout Great Britain and Ireland, in America, and in various other parts of the world. But the question may be put, — Why separate from so pious and useful a body? As this inquiry will be answered by succeeding speakers, I shall merely state, that while retaining unchanged, their doctrines and means of spiritual improvement, the separatists differed from those they left, in the fuller and more explicit recognition of popular right to interference in ecclesiastical affairs; and that a sense of duty obliged them, to take the course which they adopted. Let it not be supposed, however, that because of such difference of opinion, and secession, we entertain any unkindly feelings towards our brethren of the Older Body. For most cordially do we say, Peace be on them, and Mercy, and upon all the Israel of God." The Rev. John Bakewell, gave expression to various interesting and impressive sentiments; but it is not in our power to furnish an extract therefrom. The Rev. Samuel Hulme, after a few general remarks, stated, — "It is remarkable, that all the secessions from Wesleyanism, have had relation, not to doctrines and ordinances, but to the form of its government. The Methodist New Connexion,

is the earliest off-shoot of Methodism. On many points there is now, and ever has been, an undissembled agreement between us and the Old Connexion. We hold the same doctrinal views, declared in our creed, faithfully preached in our pulpits, most surely believed by our people; and for their illustration, we refer to the same standards.* We have the same officers. Ministers, local preachers, leaders, stewards. We have the same ordinances. Preaching, the Lord's Supper, and Baptism — prayer meetings — class meetings — love feasts. The same meetings for the government and discipline of the Body. Society meetings — Leaders' meetings — Preachers' meetings — Quarterly meetings — District meetings — Conferences. We have thus the same general outline as the Old Connexion. But that outline includes some points, on which we differ. Points, broad and important; not relating to forms, and names, and persons, but to great principles. Mr. Wesley, was the Patriarch of Methodism, and he stood in the midst of a rapidly grown and widely spread family, wielding a colossal despotism; — his will and mandate, every where paramount. Anticipating the event of his death, Mr. Wesley legalized the Methodist Body, and vested the power of government, in one hundred ministers, whom he nominated. At the formation of the New Connexion, the principle which was recognized, declared, and established is this, — that under Christ, the power of government is vested in the church. There is no record in the New Testament, of any meeting being held, for the government and discipline of the church, composed of ministers alone. Nor of any act of discipline, being performed by the ministers, independently of the church. We might also plead, that this principle, has the sanction of Ecclesiastical History; — all the respectable writers whereof affirm the union of the people with their ministers. Also, the practice of the Reformed churches. To a large extent, the principle is adopted in Episcopacy. Thoroughly adopted and acted upon, in Presbyterianism; likewise, in Independency. Such is our leading principle, and the one by which we are *still distinguished from the*

Old Connexion. No principle has been changed in Wesleyanism. No power given up. The power of the Wesleyan Conference and ministry, may have been modified into a little practical mildness; but in every recent crisis, they have shown that they still possess, and are prepared to exercise, all their ancient authority. Let us not deceive ourselves. All those causes, which required and justified the formation of the Methodist New Connexion, exist in undiminished force; and all that pertains to the purity, peace, and unity of the church of Christ, calls upon us to maintain our Connexional principles, and to work them out to their legitimate results."

At this stage of the proceedings, the thousands who had been listening, with joyous excitement, to the speakers, arose, and with grateful hearts and glad voices, united in singing the Jubilee Hymn. The effect was exceedingly fine. When the friends had resumed their seats, the Rev. Christopher Atkinson, spoke as follows. "May I be allowed to boast a little? I was a member at the Division, in 1797, though but thirteen years of age. It pleased God, thus early, to draw my mind after him, and to impart to it that bias to piety, which led to union with our beloved Community. At that age, my knowledge of church polity was very small. Of the comparative merit of systems, I was not capable of forming an opinion. Increasing years and reflection, brought conviction to my judgement, and I was satisfied that I had fixed where I ought to abide. And here I stand, as a monument of mercy, and a witness at the Jubilee, of the sufficiency of Divine grace, to keep the feet in a right direction for fifty years. With many of the Fathers of the Connexion, I was personally acquainted, and with some on terms of intimacy. Mr. Kilham, I distinctly recollect; the form of his person, the power that attended his prayers, and the deeply interesting sermons he delivered, while with us at Sheffield. His early removal, was a serious loss to our Community; of which, he, under God, might be considered the leader — the master spirit, that infused light and life into the rest." David Oldham, Esq., at the close of

a philosophic review, of the rise of Methodism, and the establishment of the New Connexion, stated, — “ Mr. Kilham, after his expulsion from the Wesleyan Connexion, travelled from place to place, preaching wherever he had an opportunity. In the course of his journeyings, he visited Macclesfield, and as neither chapel nor suitable room, could be afforded him, he took his stand on a spacious plot of vacant ground, called, Park Green. There, after preaching, he gave a brief outline of the causes, which had led to his singular position in society; and also stated, what he considered to be the scriptural constitution, and discipline of a christian church. Mr. Simpson, the venerable author of the ‘ Key to the Prophecies,’ the ‘ Plea for Religion,’ and the ‘ Plea for the Deity of Jesus,’ whose house stood close by, and who distinctly heard Mr. Kilham, from his own window, was afterwards heard to remark, — ‘ The Methodists may say what they please of Alexander Kilham, but no man in England can overturn his reasoning on church government.’ ” The Rev. P. J. Wright, after dwelling at some length on the past, remarked. “ Sound views and right feelings ought to be entertained, in relation to the Present. I cherish no sympathy, with that ever-recurring, cuckoo-note. ‘ The former times were better than these.’ I, for one, think well of the present. I regard it, as richly fraught with the True, the Pure, and the Good. It is not without defects; not without pernicious elements, and dark shades; neither were Olden Times. But, let timorous and melancholic individuals know, that already the clouds are fringed with silver light, and the evils are working together for good, in the laboratory of Providence. These are my convictions, respecting the bearings of the Present, on society at large. I have, also, a satisfactory persuasion, that the present state of our own community, augurs well concerning the future. I do not think that, on the whole, despite the diminution of our numbers, we are in any sense feebler, than we were in the palmy years preceding the Halifax Conference. There was more show then, but far less confidence, and far less solidity. Having weathered

the late storm, a consciousness of inherent energy is felt by the Connexion; and a cheerful hope animates its heart. The Connexion is wise for counsel, rich for liberality, strong for labour; in one word, fraught with resources for extensive usefulness. Jehovah speaks to us, as a section of his spiritual Israel, that we go forward; and there is nothing to discourage us, from contributing largely, to the evangelization of Great Britain."

William Makinson, Esq., having spoken in a congratulatory strain, said, — "I have been united with this people for nearly forty years. No unobservant spectator of the workings of its ecclesiastical system, deeply interested in its welfare, and seeking by every possible means, to appropriate to myself, all the advantages which its polity is calculated to afford; I am now prepared to state, without fear of contradiction, that our laws and usages are based, either directly on the usages, or partake largely of the spirit, which pervaded the apostolic church. Admirably calculated to secure the unity of our churches, yet liberally providing for the individual views and sentiments of its members, the Methodist New Connexion bids fair for useful perpetuation, and to secure all the advantages which a clear recognition of the Divine will, may be expected to furnish. When, as often has been the case, I have been privileged with a seat in your annual assemblies, or called to bear my humble part, in the promulgation of the glorious gospel, or to mingle in the more private means of grace, with which through God's blessing we are so variously and liberally furnished; I have felt my position to be a happy one, and with all the powers of my mind and soul, would I exclaim with the Psalmist, — "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning; if I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I prefer not Jerusalem to my chief joy.'" The Rev. William Cooke, was to have spoken, on the origin and progress of our Missions, but through ill health, was obliged to retire from the meeting.

The Rev. J. H. Robinson made the closing speech; in the course of which, he stated, "What have I heard to-

night? Unseemingly boastings of sectarian superiority? No. I have heard a manly, yet temperate plea, for the Scriptural character of our church government, and for the evangelical soundness and purity of our doctrines. The tear has fallen on the departed dead; friendly and skilful hands have strewed their tombs with flowers; eloquent lips have pronounced their eulogy; and the applauses of this vast multitude have attested how dear and cherished were the memories of these departed friends. But there has been no word of bitterness towards those from whom we differ. Our Jubilee trumpet has not sounded one note of defiance. In so far as God may have given us more light or privilege than our christian neighbours, our Jubilee trumpet invites them to participate the same; and in so far as we may remain behind any of them in spiritual gifts and attainments, our Jubilee trumpet tells them we are pressing after them, and that we will make our Jubilee year a fresh starting point from which to emulate their zeal for all that is holy and good." After singing the two hundred and eighty-third hymn, the benediction was pronounced, and the friends repaired with happy feelings to their various homes.

During the Jubilee year, meetings were held in about two-thirds of the circuits, and encouraging progress was made; nearly two-thirds of the sum proposed to be raised, having been promised. Although the commercial embarrassments of Great Britain have necessitated considerable delay, arrangements are made, and will promptly be carried out, for completing the effort in those circuits where it is begun, and for commencing it in the circuits, where postponement was deemed likely to encourage more liberal subscriptions.

On the eleventh and thirteenth of September, in our Jubilee year, a new chapel was opened at Higher Hurst, near Ashton, *free from debt*. In 1808, preaching was commenced at Hurst, by our ministers, in the house of Sampson Grundy, at the request of the late Mr. and Mrs. Whitaker. A society was formed without delay, and Mrs.

Whittaker and Mrs. Martha Grundy were among the first members. In 1812, a chapel was built. Shortly after the opening of the chapel, a Sabbath School was established. In 1835, a school room was erected, at a cost of six hundred and fifty pounds. There are at present in the school about five hundred and fifty scholars. The late Mr. Whittaker left a legacy of one hundred pounds for its use. The debt remaining on the school is not more than seventy-six pounds. In 1844, it was determined, under the auspices of John Whittaker, Esq., to erect a new chapel, nearly or altogether free from debt. After handsome subscriptions had been obtained, the first stone of the building was laid by Mr. Whittaker, on Good Friday, 1845. The chapel is built of stone, in the Gothic style, and is everything both externally and internally, that taste and piety could desire. Its dimensions are thirty-nine feet wide, and sixty-three feet long. Sermons were preached at the opening services, by the Revds. Dr. Vaughan, S. Hulme, J. Hudston, and J. Poxon. The collections amounted to two hundred and eighty pounds. The previous subscriptions to one thousand, four hundred and sixty-five pounds. Only sixty pounds additional were requisite to defray the entire cost of the building, and arrangements were made for the payment of this small deficit. Our friends in other circuits should consider what has been done at Hurst, and as far as possible, do likewise.

In December, of our Jubilee year, a spacious chapel was opened at Hunslet, near Leeds. The first effort to improve our affairs at Hunslet, where for years there had been a small chapel and society in a stationary state, was made by pious females. The Sabbath School being two hundred pounds in debt, they set themselves to remove it, and continued their labour of love till the object was accomplished. In March, 1844, the chapel was conveyed to trustees who felt an interest in the welfare of the cause. These individuals made vigorous efforts, both to relieve the estate and to save precious souls. In 1845, the friends determined to arise and build a chapel that would do honour, and be a

means of benefit, to the Connexion. Land was purchased in a most eligible situation, and more than one thousand pounds were promised towards the building of a suitable edifice. In due time, the chapel was erected and ready for occupancy. Its dimensions are fifty-one feet wide, and fifty-seven feet long. Its appearance is tasteful and imposing. Sermons were preached at the opening services, by the Revds. T. Allin, W. Burrows, J. H. Robinson, J. Ely, G. B. Macdonald, T. W. Ridley, and S. Hulme. The collections, with a gift of one hundred pounds from a number of ladies, and the proceeds of a tea party, amounted to the noble sum of five hundred guineas. The entire estate is freehold property; and its trust deed is the Chapel Model Deed of the Methodist New Connexion.

Since the holding of the Jubilee Conference, the "King of Terrors" has bereaved the Connexion of several worthy and valued friends.

The sudden death of our amiable and generous friend, Jonathan Akroyd, Esq. is no common calamity. His qualities as a tradesman, a patriot, a parent, and a christian, excited general admiration, and endeared him to all who came within the circle of his influence. The partial closing of the shops as soon as his death was known; the entire closing on the day of interment; and the immense assemblage of sorrowing spectators which attended his remains to the burial ground of our chapel in Halifax, were unequivocal indications of the high estimate of his worth formed by all parties; and of their profound sense of the loss sustained by the commonwealth. Through the blessing of Providence Mr. Akroyd had obtained considerable wealth; but he was neither puffed up with pride, nor made a votary of ambition. To a princely mien, and large pecuniary resources, he added the graces of frankness, condescension, kindness of heart, humility, and benevolence. From early life, he was warmly attached to the New Connexion. His mansion was ever open to its ministers; and there they met a reception, not of stately courteousness, but of heartfelt goodwill, which made them immediately feel at home. His liberality in

support of our ministry and our institutions ; for the relief of Salem chapel, and the carrying out of the objects of the Jubilee Fund, is well known. He has gone from among us to a better world ; his memory is dear to us ; we know not who shall fill his place, and with submissive patience we set our hope in God.

The almost equally sudden death of the lamented Treasurer of our Missions, Jonathan Thornhill, Esq., is a painful dispensation. Following, so quickly, the departure of Mr. Akroyd, it fills us with surprise, and sorrow, and solemn reflection. Like Aaron, we hold our peace, for the Lord has done it ; and what we know not now, we shall know hereafter. The services Mr. Thornhill rendered our Mission Fund, during a season of great pecuniary difficulty, will long live in our grateful recollection. His disposition to please, his courtesy of manner, his conscientious performance of duty, his devoutness of feeling, his aptness in quoting scripture, his respect for our ministers, and his love of our Connexion, will often, for years to come, be the subject of approving remark in our social converse. “ The voice said, Cry. And he said, What shall I cry ? All flesh is grass ; and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it : surely the people is grass. The grass withereth, the flower fadeth, but *the word of our God shall stand for ever.*”

Ebenezer. Hitherto the Lord has helped us. Let us abundantly show forth the memory of His goodness ; for they that offer praise, glorify God ; and praise is comely for the upright. Manifold are our reasons for joyfulness and thanksgiving. When we were few and feeble, and had many enemies, we were kept in the hollow of Jehovah's hand, and preserved as the apple of His eye. Having led us about for a season, and instructed us amidst trying circumstances, he established us in the land and sent us prosperity. Gradually, difficulties were overcome ; gainsayers were put to silence ; institutions were formed ; places of worship were multiplied ; circuits were consolidated ; new

fields of usefulness were entered ; saints were built up on their most holy faith ; backsliders were reclaimed ; sinners were converted to God ; the little one became a thousand, and the small one a thriving people. During successive years we have continued to grow in intelligence, pecuniary resources, accommodation for public worship, numbers, love of the truth as it is in Jesus, devotion to scriptural freedom, and zeal for the diffusion of Christianity. At the present period, we hold the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace ; we sit under our own vine, none daring to make us afraid ; we possess a liberal constitution ; we believe and set forth Methodist theology, in its freeness, fulness, and distinctive characteristics ; we glory in the cross of Christ ; we enforce righteous discipline ; we enjoy abundant means of spiritual improvement ; we have an efficient ministry — sons of thunder, sons of consolation, and lustrous lights guiding heavenward ; we sustain noble Sabbath-schools ; our Mission Fund is out of debt ; we employ more missionaries in proportion to the magnitude of our Connexion than any other denomination in Great Britain ; we are doing good in the world, with an encouraging prospect of doing still greater good ; and, thankful that thousands have been translated from our ranks to cast their crowns before the throne, we are following them in the way of righteousness, with a good hope, through grace, of sharing their honour and blessedness for evermore. “Thanks be to God, who leadeth us on in triumph with Christ, and maketh manifest by us, the odour of the knowledge of Christ. Now to Him that is able to keep us from falling, and to present us faultless before the presence of His glory, with exceeding joy ; to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and for ever. Amen.”

CHAPTER VI.

FORCE OF TRUTH — ILLUSTRATIVE FACTS — SEPARATISTS FROM WESLEYANISM — PRIMITIVE METHODISTS — BIBLE CHRISTIANS — PROTESTANT METHODISTS IN AMERICA — WESLEYAN ASSOCIATION — WESLEYAN CONFERENCE — ADAPTATION OF OUR PRINCIPLES TO THE ADVANCING CONDITION OF SOCIETY — REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT — FREE TRADE — SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE — SCOTCH FREE CHURCH — FREEDOM OF THOUGHT — SCIENCE AND RELIGION — UNITY AMONG CHRISTIANS — WELFARE OF THE MULTITUDE — NEW CONNEXION — PERPETUITY.

SILENT and resistless is the energy of Truth. Nothing can prevent its prevalence. It must, and will triumph. Error, for a season, may exercise mastery over the intellect and habits of men, but, when Truth is brought to bear upon it, the spell of its influence will slowly dissolve, and those who had been held in bondage by it, will be made free. The subduing power of truth is like the wonderful force of the rising sun. The gloom of night, the unwholesome fog, and the cold damp air, are driven away; the face of nature is suffused with tints and flushes of beauty; and myriads of living creatures are filled with pleasure; by the noiseless shining forth of the morning light. Such is the effect of Truth. It calmly rises on the dark domain of ignorance, falsehood, and injustice; and, almost before men are aware, it puts forth brightness and strength, which awaken new views, mould society into fresh forms, melt down the institutions of selfishness, and give a benign aspect to human affairs. In vain do craft, and pride, and prejudice, and authority, endeavour to stay its progress. As well might they attempt to roll back the tide of glory, which gushes from the Day-spring, through earth and skies. Truth can-

not be overcome. It is born to conquer and reign. All that is false — every false system — false philosophy, false science, false polity, false ethics, and false religion will fall before it. God has sent it into the world to subdue all things unto itself.

Facts, which illustrate the above statement, might be adduced in abundance from the history of mankind. A few must suffice. When the Great Teacher moved to and fro in Judea, He did not strive, He did not cry, He did not lift up His voice in noisy tones to excite the multitude. He calmly set forth Truth in its simplicity and heavenliness. Beautiful parables, and serious appeals, fell from His lips, in accents of tenderness, on the ears and hearts of men. His words were not spoken in vain; they were nails fastened in sure places by the Master of assemblies. The result is well known. The sayings of Christ are the rules of faith and practice to millions of the human race, and are destined to be obeyed throughout the world. When the Apostles went forth among the Gentiles they employed neither fraud, nor force, to make idolaters the servants of the Lord Christ. The weapons of their warfare were not carnal, but mighty through God, to pull down the strongholds of error, superstition, and sin. They did nothing more than enunciate the Truth as it is in Jesus. Quietly, yet rapidly, the influence of their preaching spread through all classes of social life, till Paganism, though venerable and strong with the growth of ages, melted away like the mockery of a midnight dream. Its fanes, its priesthood, its mystic oracles, its alters, and its superstitious rites were utterly abolished, and their place was filled with Christianity. The thoughtful and earnest men, whose honour it was to introduce the Reformation did so by means of the pulpit and the press. They spoke and wrote with quietness, assurance, and the patience of hope, in behalf of the pure religion contained in the New Testament. Many of them slept with their fathers before the crisis came. But what they had said and written, moved softly, like the waters of Siloah, in many an under current, among the nations of christendom;

undermining the foundations of Popery, till vast portions of the superstructure suddenly fell, and Protestantism arose upon its ruins. John Wesley, through the grace of God, brought Methodism into existence; and promoted a wide-spread revival of piety, with remarkable calmness. His sermons were short, and they were delivered without enthusiasm, — in a singularly quiet manner. But they were full of momentous and saving truth. Hence, his plain and faithful words told with power on the conscience of the people. They were convinced, confounded, overwhelmed: incited to fall on their knees as suppliants for mercy, and converted to God. Alexander Kilham did not organize a formidable array of agents and means, in contending for the liberty of the disciples of Christ. He merely wrote a few letters, and published two or three tracts, while diligently attending to the onerous duties of the Methodist ministry. These letters and tracts inculcated reverence for the testimony of the Faithful Witness; “One is your Master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” Thousands were moved thereby, to deny the right of ministers to exercise lordship over believers; and to establish the New Connexion on a basis, which acknowledges Jesus Christ as our Divine Master, and maintains equality between ministers and laymen, in regulating ecclesiastical affairs. Since this was done, the great truth which the constitution of the New Connexion embodies, has been taking a strong hold on the minds of Methodists, and exerting an extraordinary influence on their proceedings.

It is worthy of notice that no Body of separatists from Wesleyanism has retained the polity of Wesleyanism. Its doctrines have been preserved with holy jealousy, but its government has been repudiated with unhesitating earnestness.

Nearly forty years since, the “Primitive Methodists” began their zealous labours. They consisted originally of a number of Wesleyans, who commenced the holding of “Camp Meetings,” in Staffordshire, with the design of turning the ungodly from the service of Satan to the service

of Christ. These proceedings were deemed irregular by the Wesleyan Conference; and, instead of being watched over and rendered useful, were denounced and proscribed. The result of such arbitrary conduct was the formation of the Primitive Methodist Connexion. The plain and earnest men who took the lead of the new movement, went every where, preaching the gospel with great fidelity and success. Societies have been raised, by the blessing of God on the untiring exertions of these individuals and their successors, in almost every populous district of Great Britain; consisting of converts from the humblest and the most profligate portions of society. Doubtless, they have conveyed a large amount of religious instruction and moral benefit to numbers who had lived, from their youth up, in brutish ignorance and sensuality. The Conference of the Primitive Methodists is composed of laymen and preachers, in the proportion of two to one; two-thirds of the members thereof being laymen, and one-third preachers. Thus our worthy friends illustrate the proverb: "in avoiding one extreme, men frequently run to another." Whether the Primitive Methodist Connexion is adapted for perpetuity, is a problem often propounded in conversation, by intelligent observers of the constitution and operations of the religious sects existing in Great Britain. Perhaps, time only will solve the problem. One thing, however, is certain; it cannot be wise and good for one sect to consist mainly of the rich, and another sect almost entirely of the poor. The rich and the poor ought to meet together, for the Lord is the Maker of them all.

In the year 1815, a Wesleyan local preacher, of the name of Bryan, went through various destitute districts, in the West of England, preaching the gospel. Being made useful in the conversion of sinners, he formed societies which are now known by the name of "Bible Christians." This led to a separation from the Wesleyans. In a few years, a Conference was held, and the societies were formally constituted a Connexion, consisting of twelve circuits. In 1825, Mr. Bryan evinced a determination to rule the Bible Christians, without respect to the views and decisions of the

Annual Conference. His attempt to rule alone was successfully resisted. The Conference of the Bible Christians is composed of preachers and laymen, in unequal proportions, except once in five years. None but circuit stewards are eligible for election as lay-representatives in the District Meetings, and in the Conference. Every fifth year, the District Meetings are expected to send as many lay-representatives as will make the preachers and laymen equal in the Conference. The remarks already made respecting the zeal and usefulness of the Primitive Methodists, will apply with equal propriety to the Bible Christians. The Bible Christians should unite with the Primitive Methodists. They are so much alike in their spirit and habits, as to make it unreasonable for them to remain apart.

In the United States of America, a large Body of Methodists separated, some years since, from the parent community, and formed a Connexion, on the basis of equal representation of Ministers and Laymen in Conference. This Community, designated "Protestant Methodists," is numerous and energetic. More than once, resolutions have been passed by the New Connexion Conference, encouraging fellowship between the two Bodies. Friendly correspondence took place after the passing of such resolutions, but no other proceedings have been adopted. It is desirable, however, that representative intercourse should be established. The constitution of the "Protestant Methodists," so fully agrees with the liberal institutions of America, as to render its prevalence almost morally certain. In conjunction with this prospect, it is gratifying to notice, the growing prosperity of the Methodist New Connexion in Canada. On each side of the St. Lawrence, Free Methodism is waxing stronger, doing good, and giving promise that it will spread its benign influence over the whole northern hemisphere of the new world.

About twelve years since, the Wesleyan Association was formed, by a considerable number of separatists from the Old Body. At the commencement of the Association, an attempt was made to combine Independency and Connexion-

alism. The plan was unsuccessful, notwithstanding the ingenious expedient of an inner and an outer circle. The Association is now thoroughly Connexional in its form of government. Other theories were held by it at first which have been relinquished. It professed to repudiate legislative authority in the Conference; and, to make the theory complete, renounced the name of "Conference," took that of "Annual Assembly," and issued its resolutions in the form of recommendations. It withheld the title of "Reverend," from its ministers. It asserted the right of every society to manage its affairs irrespective of either circuit, or connexional arrangements. It adopted unequal representation of preachers and laymen in Conference. These peculiarities have, in practice, become void. The Annual Assembly or Conference of the Association avowedly legislates — enacting resolutions which are binding on the circuits. In its minutes, its ministers are styled "Reverend." Its societies, like the societies of the New Connexion, while they manage what are exclusively their own affairs, are submissive to the general arrangements of the Connexion. And the Assembly consists, as nearly as possible, of an equal number of ministers and lay-representatives. With a practical working of this description, it is to be deplored, that the Wesleyan Association should continue separate from the New Connexion. As the elder and more firmly consolidated body, the New Connexion naturally expects the Association to make common cause with it; just as the still less consolidated Protestant Methodists in Leeds, made common cause with the Wesleyan Association. Such a course would be a graceful concession to Christian Union; would increase the strength of Liberal Methodism in Great Britain; and the two Bodies, being One, would contribute more largely than they can in their separate state, to the evangelization of the world. Seeing that both Communities entertain unfeigned respect for each other, and the hearts of their most worthy members yearn for so desirable a consummation, why should it not BE so?

The progress of opinion and events has influenced the

proceedings of the Wesleyan Conference. It has incited the Rulers of Wesleyanism to adopt the politic expedient of appointing laymen on the committees, which transact the business of the Connexion. It is needful, however, to guard against a misinterpretation of this fact. To argue therefrom, that Wesleyanism is more liberal in its polity, would be highly inconclusive. Lay representatives are not appointed by the circuits to sit with the preachers in District Meetings; and in the Conference, the preachers still sit alone, as legislators for the entire community. The people have no voice in the appointment of laymen, as members of committees. The parties selected, are the mere nominees of the preachers. In truth, the introduction of laymen to Wesleyan committees, is not a concession at all to popular rights, but a convenience to the preachers; at once carrying the semblance of liberality, and increasing their influence over wealthy members in various circuits. Nothing evinces this more clearly than the ominous circumstance, that of late years, the Plan of Pacification, in its bearing on the privileges of members of society, has been deprived of the liberal construction it once had; and by express legislation of Conference so interpreted, as to augment in a large degree the power of the preachers. Wesleyanism, at the present hour, is what it was in the time of Kilham; a vast and powerful despotism.

One circumstance is highly encouraging to the Methodist New Connexion: its principles are in complete accordance with the progressive opinions and movements of society. Once they were in advance of the Times: now they are precisely what the Times require. Opposite principles are antagonistic to the existing state of things, and will be overcome and trodden down, by the onward march of mankind in knowledge, freedom, and godliness. Our principles will accelerate the progress of humanity; and they will abide in dignity and strength, when it has reached its utmost height of perfectness.

Representative government is characteristic of Great Britain. As Englishmen we justly consider it the Palla-

dium of our liberty and well being. Any attempt to set it aside would meet with instant and terrible retribution. It is cemented with the blood of patriots, it is regarded with profound veneration, and it is felt to be dearer than life.

Free Trade has recently won a stoutly fought battle with human selfishness. The victory already gained is the prelude to other victories. The enrichment of a few, at the expense of multitudes, will be tolerated no longer. Class legislation is a denounced and doomed thing. It must cease from among the nations. The law of liberty, founded on the principle of doing to others as we would they should do unto us, will prevail in the commerce of the world.

The separation of the Church from the State will be the next pressing question of the age. The forces are gathering, and the lines are drawing for a resolute conflict. The struggle will be severe, but the issue is in no sense doubtful. Monopoly of religion cannot long co-exist with freedom of trade. The golden link, which unites the kingdom that is *not* of this world, to the kingdom that *is* of this world, will be torn asunder. Christianity will be made free; and, conscious of moral beauty and strength, she will go forth, bright as the sun, fair as the moon, and triumphant as an army with banners.

Presbyterianism has lately shaken itself from the trammels of state support, and state control. Scotland has nobly vindicated the Sovereignty of Christ, and the spirituality of His kingdom. The Scotch Free Church is a sublime spectacle. It is little less than a moral miracle. It has settled beyond all controversy the efficiency of the voluntary principle. It has settled it in the only way in which it could be settled: not by elaborate argumentation, but with munificent contributions. The superiority of voluntaryism is no longer debatable, for we see it exemplified.

In the Times on which we have fallen, freedom of thought is peculiarly prevalent. Men are less disposed than they have been for many centuries to submit to dogmatism. They demand evidence in support of every statement that is put forth. They question, test, and prove all things.

Inquiry is their habit; demonstration is their object. They are determined not to be imposed upon, either by assumption, or by sophistry. They cherish the praiseworthy resolve to search out, and hold fast, whatever is True, and Just and Good.

Science ceases to scoff at religion. Religion ceases to frown on science. Through a happy conjuncture of events, they have met together, and are kissing each other. The hour of mockery by the one, and of reproof by the other, is past. Henceforth, they will dwell together in amity and good will. They will mutually illustrate the wisdom, power, and grace of God. Science will adorn and enrich religion; and religion will ennoble and sanctify science.

Christians sigh for unity. They lament the prevalence of schism and sectarianism. They yearn to be made — obviously and really — one fold, under one Shepherd. They do not yet, clearly see their way to this delightful oneness. But they are feeling after it, if haply they may find it. O that such a baptism of light and love, may soon be given, as will make believers one in Christ; and convince the world, that He is the blessed and only Potentate — the Great God and our Saviour.

A growing respect is felt for the multitude. Once it was deemed right to overlook, or forget, or remember, merely to oppress, the millions who toil hard for the bread that perishes. It is not so at the present hour. The working classes, are remembered for good. While their duties and responsibilities are explained, their rights are acknowledged; their sentiments are listened to with thoughtful attention; their sympathies are held sacred; and manifold efforts are made to improve their earthly allotment. Unquestionably much remains to be done; but in due time it will be accomplished, and goodly will be the heritage, of our industrious countrymen.

With the circumstances adverted to, the principles of the New Connexion are in perfect agreement. These principles involve, representation of all interests, freedom of commerce, religious equality, voluntary support of religion, liberty of

thought, enlightened piety, christian union, and strong solicitude for the welfare of the masses in humble life.

From what has been stated, it follows, that the New Connexion, is likely to be favoured with prosperous perpetuity. Providence has brought it into existence, and adapted it to the present state of society, that it may instrumentally effect a great and good work in the earth. From the changes which take place, and the advancement that is made in knowledge and civilization, it has nothing to fear, and every thing to hope. The adherents of systems, founded in selfish and exclusive principles, may tremble at the startling movements, which characterize the existing era ; but the friends of the New Connexion, will rejoice and be exceeding glad, for they know that these movements will hasten the reign of truth, and justice, and charity. Our principles can never be overpast, by advancing wisdom and righteousness. Increasing light and grace, so far from rendering them obsolete, will make them better understood, more highly appreciated, and remarkably effective in their practical applications. Honour and joy, in large measure, await the New Connexion. Her future progress will evince, that the glory of God has risen upon her, blessing her, and making her a blessing. No weapon that is formed against her will prosper ; every tongue that is moved against her will be put to silence ; her converts will multiply ; her institutions will be enduring ; her missions will extend ; and she will contribute, in no inconsiderable degree, to evangelize the human race.

CHAPTER VII.

THE METHODIST NEW CONNEXION A PART OF THE TRUE UNIVERSAL CHURCH OF CHRIST — IDENTITY WITH METHODISM — RELATIVE POSITION, THE SAME AS IN 1797 — CIRCUMSTANCES ALTERED — PRIVILEGE OF MEMBERSHIP, AND SPIRIT IN WHICH TO BE EXERCISED — MISTAKEN VIEWS OF THE USE AND END OF LIBERTY AND CHURCH GOVERNMENT — THE SPIRITUALITY OF THE CHURCH — RELIGIOUS ORDINANCES — EMINENT HOLINESS NECESSARY TO COUNTERACT THE PREVALENT SPIRIT OF INFIDELITY AND IRRELIGIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY — CHARACTER OF FIRST METHODIST PREACHERS — THE CHURCH BOUND TO TRAIN MINISTERS — INSTITUTION — PARENTS TO DEVOTE THEIR CHILDREN TO THE MINISTRY — EDUCATION OF THE YOUNG — CHURCH OF ROME — RELIGION IN THE HOME — BAPTISM — CONNEXION HAS PRACTICALLY NEGLECTED ITS DUTY TO THE BAPTIZED — REMEDY — SABBATH SCHOOLS — WANT OF SUCCESS — CAUSES — CATECHUMEN CLASSES — DAY SCHOOLS — YOUNG MEN — THEIR IMPORTANCE AS LABOURERS IN THE CHURCH — ASSOCIATIONS FOR MENTAL AND RELIGIOUS IMPROVEMENT — MORE TO BE DONE BY THE CONNEXION — HOME MISSION — FOREIGN MISSION — BOOK ROOM — CAPABLE OF BEING MORE USEFUL TO THE CONNEXION — CONNEXIONAL FUNDS — LIBERALITY — JUBILEE CLAIMS — METHODISM NEITHER SUPERANNATED NOR SUPERSEDED — UNIVERSAL CO-OPERATION — HOPEFUL INDICATIONS — PROSPECTS — DESTINY, ETC.

HAVING recorded the facts connected with the origin, formation, and progress of the Connexion; expounded its distinctive principles, and proved them to be rational and scriptural; we are fully prepared to claim that we be considered a real part of the universal Church of Christ. We are not a schismatical faction. There is not amongst us,

ither the fact or the temper of schism. He would be a
 ardy and a blinded sectary, deeply imbued with the
 pirit of schism, who would contend that on either side of
 he controversy, which was prosecuted about the year 1797,
 he immaculate spirit of love was uniformly exemplified.
 The evils complained of were not fictions, but realities ; and
 n the attempt to remove them, an attempt resisted by
 uch violence, there might be here and there the manifest-
 ation of a temper which indicated more of the frailty of
 human nature than the "love of the Spirit." The leading
 men of those times were not servile temporizers, or restless
 levellers ; but men of enlightened minds and sober judge-
 ments, actuated by a disinterested and devout regard to the
 glory of God ; the peace, purity, and prosperity of His
 Church. They believed there existed certain principles in
 the community of which they were members and officers,
 as much opposed to reason as to scripture ; and which prin-
 ciples produced numerous and deplorable practical evils.
 This conviction was frankly avowed, and a reformation long
 and earnestly sought. When all hope of accomplishing
 such reform was extinguished, the dissidents peaceably
 withdrew, and founded the "New Itinerancy," whose con-
 stitution and laws they made to accord with, what they be-
 lieved to be, the rights of human nature, and with New
 Testament precedents and precepts. The church thus or-
 ganized was not a lawless rabble, but included scriptural
 officers, ordinances, and discipline. We have all the con-
 stituents of a Christian church, and we can plead the in-
 dubitable seal of God's gracious favour. He has made the
 gospel preached in our pulpits, the *power of God unto the
 salvation* of souls ; our ordinances have been *times of re-
 freshing from the presence of the Lord* ; the *fruits of the
 Holy Spirit* are manifested in the lives of our members ;
 their death beds have been scenes of peaceful, and not in-
 frequently, of ecstatic triumph, the blissful prelude of eter-
 nal joys. This, then, is our position, a scripturally organ-
 ized, and divinely accredited Church of Christ.

We have thus an identity with the "whole family in

earth and heaven ;" and we have also an identity with Methodism in all those cardinal points which constitute its essence and glory. We have the same ordinances, and means of grace ; the same truths are preached in our sanctuaries, and we recognize the same expository standards of faith ; the same experience is heard in our class meetings and love feasts ; we have the same graduated scale of officers ; the same methods of supporting the regular ministry ; the same relation between the churches comprised in a given locality, called a circuit ; the same relation of these circuits to each other as forming one community, bound together by mutual sympathy and interests, and governed by the same laws. These points, of faith, and church order have never been brought into dispute amongst us. Of the great Methodistic family, so far as these important points are concerned, it may be said, " We all eat the same spiritual meat," and " all drink the same spiritual drink." We differ, but these differences respect the rights and powers said to be inherent in the *Ministry*, but which we believe Jesus Christ has vested in the *Church*. We would not, on the one hand, conceal the points on which we differ, they are obvious, and important ; so neither would we exaggerate them, by giving to them a place which their nature cannot claim, and which they do not possess in the word of God. Whatever misrepresentation may have said, or prejudice may still refuse to believe, our entire history proves that we have kept "*the faith once delivered to the saints.*" We have never tampered with, or swerved from accredited standards of faith. We have never sold our birth-right. Methodism has received no dishonour from us. We have been *valiant for the truth.*

But we cannot compromise. Our position is precisely the same as that taken up by the founders of the New Connexion, and to that position we are bound by the unchangeable nature of our principles, and by the unchanged condition of that necessity, which in the beginning called for the adoption of those principles. Popery necessitated Protestantism. And so long as the Church of Rome cleaves

to its errors and corruptions, so long must Protestantism be perpetuated, both as a witness against it, and as a means of reforming it. And so long as the Wesleyan constitution and government remain unaltered, so long must the New Connexion remain a system of antagonism. Minor relaxations and reforms recently made, taken in connection with the power said to have been given up by the Laws of Pacification, cannot be regarded as greatly altering the relative condition of the two bodies. Nor are these changes entitled to any consideration, except in so far as they indicate a change of opinion in the Old Connexion. When the nature and extent of these changes is considered, in connection with the boldness with which the principles and powers to which we object have been claimed, argued, and put into force, the most candid and sanguine can scarcely welcome them as "the morning spread upon the mountains." In recent treatises, this authority has been declared to be inherent in the pastoral office, and the scriptures summoned to prove it; recent Conferences have defined and fortified it; and in recent instances of Methodist insubordination, the ministry has exercised it in all its ancient plenitude. Our position, therefore, is substantially the same it was in 1797, and the obligation rests upon us in undiminished force, to be the faithful expositors, advocates, and exemplars of our distinctive principles.

In some important respects, our circumstances are different from those which existed at the formation of the Connexion. Then, the constitution was a theory, — an experiment. We had little more than the *outlines of a constitution*; the principles of which were well understood, but it required time and experience, fully and wisely to apply them. And, considering the obstacles which beset the attempt to establish a *New Itinerancy*, the stoutest hearts might well tremble for the issue. But God, who presides over the birth of principles, promotes their growth, and gives them to be a blessing to the world, protected and nourished the tender vine. Our principles have been practically tried, and subjected to public scrutiny. The theory is now become

a fact. History has dispersed the clouds which enveloped the future, and now we see that our constitutional principles are capable of producing all that peace, order, and prosperity, which their first propounders affirmed they were.

Civil freedom can do no more than open a way for the development of the resources of a nation ; and religious freedom can only facilitate the development of the resources of the church. To suppose that a system of church government, however just in its principles, or wise in its laws, or however faithfully administered, can give intelligence and piety to its members, or convert souls to God, is to mistake its nature and its use. A well-balanced government will provide for the rights of all, and will also protect from injury the exercise of those rights. By thus precluding the cause of envy, jealousy, and ambition, it will prevent strife, heart-burnings, and alienations. Under the benign operation of our constitution there has been maintained and exhibited amongst us, a spirit of mutual confidence, brotherly love, and co-operation. The Connexion has been disquieted by faction and heresy ; and has not the constitution ever proved itself equal to the suppression of the one, and the extirpation of the other ? He who argues that faction and heresy have existed in the Connexion even to the result of a division, and therefore, its government is fallacious in principle, or infirm in act, must be either grossly uncandid as a disputant, or else totally ignorant of the province of law, and the functions of government. If our reason, when exercised upon the moral nature of man, the relations of society, and the statements of scripture, have carried us to the conclusion that the principles on which our government is based are true ; so the history of half a century gives its testimony to their reality and benignant influence. There has been no failure. As the experiment of the chemist oftentimes confirms the antecedent conjecture ; so here the history illustrates and establishes the previous reasoning ; and both strengthen our faith and warm our hopes.

Next to the privilege of adoption into the family of God, is the privilege of fellowship with the saints ; and the more

perfect the fellowship, the greater the privilege. To be members of a church which is based upon the principles of scriptural freedom; which takes away all just occasion of strife — makes no contrarieties of interest — invests no class of members with powers, which, whenever exercised, must necessarily either destroy or trench upon the rights of others — which gives the fullest access to each other's heart in confidence, affection, and esteem — and presents ample opportunities for works of faith and labours of love — to be members of such a church, is the greatest privilege we can possess on this side heaven. A privilege, which demands gratitude and praise to him who has *called us to be saints*, and *added us to the church*. The privileges, which, as members of the New Connexion, we thus possess, should be well understood, in the rights and obligations they confer. These rights are to be exercised with a just regard to the minister and pastor, as the highest officer Jesus Christ has appointed in his church, who is invested with authority to rule the church, to preach the gospel, dispense the sacraments, and ordain to offices — with a due regard to the order which Jesus Christ has established in his church, to control and alter which, private judgement and personal feeling cannot in anywise be warranted — and with a due sense of responsibility to the Great Head of the church, the laws of whose kingdom, are as binding, as the first and second commandments, and indeed have their foundation in those commandments. Jesus Christ *walketh in the midst of the golden candlesticks*, and nothing either in spirit or act, inconsistent with the *order* and *governments* He has appointed, escapes his notice or disapprobation. It must not be concealed that our free constitution, is very liable to be perverted to licentious purposes. We read that such was the case in apostolic churches, though perfect in their constitution and pastoral supervision. Some love to have the pre-eminence, others impatient of the restraint which legitimate government imposes, are ever litigious and restless. Some confounding *freedom* with *equality*, would abolish all official distinctions in the church, thus disregarding the injunction

of the apostle, "we beseech you brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admonish you; and to esteem them very highly in love, for their work's sake." Others, imperfect in their piety, and entertaining very defective views of the purposes for which the Christian church exists, are ever looking at the external scaffolding, and labouring to mend that, while they overlook and neglect the temple, to rear which that scaffolding has been constructed. Such dispositions and procedure, are as incompatible with personal piety and usefulness, as they are destructive of church order and prosperity. We want not a confiding laity. Our ministry claims no servile deference. We have no mysteries and repel no inquiry. Intelligence and candour are our strongholds. Human nature is prone to evil, and the best systems are liable to be corrupted. So history admonishes us. Hence the necessity of sleepless supervision. Let there be a wakeful jealousy, ever intent upon preserving the principles, laws, and institutions of the Connexion in their original purity and power: but let that jealousy be regulated by a becoming submission to established rule; and deference to the judgement and feelings of others; and by a devout regard to those higher objects, to accomplish which, the most perfect system of church government can be regarded as only subsidiary and instrumental — the edification of the church, and the conversion of souls.

Mistaken views as to the nature and ends of church government, have led to serious failures in many hopeful enterprises. Liberty is protection against injury; and laws prescribe a course of action: both, when left to themselves, are impotent abstractions. To suppose that a constitution however just and scriptural, can supersede personal endeavour, is to invest an abstraction with causative power. To rely upon the wisdom of laws and institutions, instead of relying devoutly upon the *Lord of Hosts*, is to incur the withering malediction, "Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord." It is to be lamented, while it is

acknowledged, that in this respect we have erred and strayed. The system has been too much left to work itself: great care meanwhile being taken that it should be most complete and comely in all its parts. This has been our weakness, and a prevalent cause of our defective prosperity. To combine with our free constitution, the spirit, and habit of artless piety, unquenchable zeal, and daring enterprize; which distinguished the founders of Methodism and graced its earliest history; would be to realize the most perfect feature of a Christian church, and make the nearest approach to what that church was in apostolic times. Let this idea possess us, and let its full influence be cherished and manifested, and Jehovah will *make us a name and a praise among all people of the earth*. The defects of a system of church government, may, to a large extent, be concealed, and their natural results greatly mitigated by the earnest piety and zeal of its ministers and members: so that many, not skilled in tracing effects to their specific causes, are very liable to fall into the error of attributing concurrent gracious fruits, to the natural operation of the system; and thus a government, demonstrably unscriptural, may for a time, acquire popularity and influence, by combining with its false principles a piety, liberality, and zeal, which clothe it with the hues of spiritual health, and the marks of divine benediction. With us, however, to a large extent, the case is exactly the reverse. The excellence of our principles has been concealed and their genuine fruits marred by the want of an enlarged, and persevering spirit of liberality, and earnest enterprize. We have not only failed thus to recommend our principles, but we have laid them open to prejudice and objection. The result has been, the Connexion has not rendered that service for which it was fitted, to the cause of religious freedom, and to the higher objects of the world's conversion, and the Saviour's mediatorial glory. A clear and unanimous conviction of this fact is, we fear, yet lacking among us. Could it be produced, it would go far, to lay the foundation of great and lasting prosperity.

The object of the publication of this volume, is not merely

to declare and defend our principles, but to point out the mode in which those principles may be rendered most extensively contributory to the enlargement of the church and the glory of God. It is of importance that we be fully persuaded of the truth of our distinctive principles, so that our union with the body may be vital, the result of enlightened conviction; and not nominal, the result of education, or prejudice, or circumstances. Then will our attachment be strong, stable, and practical. The acknowledgement must not be withheld, that the possession of a larger measure of the spirit of apostolic churches, would have adorned our history with brighter and more triumphant passages. Be it so, that we have made advances, equal, considering our numbers; and greater, considering our circumstances, than the parent body of Methodists. Can this plea avail to our justification at the bar of God, or at the bar of individual judgement? The standard is unauthorized, defective, and must be repudiated. It is *comparing ourselves with ourselves*: a resort to which may be permitted, to parry an objection and silence a sectarian boaster. To the law and the testimony. Let the decision be made in distinct view of New Testament commands; the example of the apostles and first disciples; the labours, sorrows, and death of him who has left us an example that we should tread in his steps—let there be a comparison of our providential and gracious gifts and opportunities with these laws and examples, and who will venture to affirm and defend the faithfulness of the Connexion? Vitiating the standard, applying a false rule, and we may solace lukewarmness, indolence, and selfishness. This would perpetuate a condition replete with the elements of weakness, inefficiency, and dishonor. If we wish to be healthful and prosperous we must seize the right standard, lift it up to its full dimensions, and aspire to reach its topmost point.

The Church is a society of believers in Jesus Christ. A union of hearts with each other in love, by virtue of their union by faith with that Saviour who is the Living Head of his people. Only those who are *sanctified in Christ Jesus*

and called to be saints are members of the Church. It is not the assumption of a name; the adoption of certain theological opinions; the maintenance of social morality; nor meeting with God's people in a particular sanctuary. *Ye must be born again. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* To add to the church those, whom there is every warrant to believe have not experienced this change, may swell its numbers, and increase its secular pomp and influence. Such an association, however, could present no "pure offering," to Jehovah; and could neither administer scriptural discipline, nor accomplish the conversion of the world. To all the duties and ends for which the church exists it would be essentially unfitted. When Methodism started into full life and power, such was the condition of the churches in this country. In the Establishment, the principle of membership was territorial, and the church included the inhabitants of the parish; and non-conformist churches, while they recognized a scriptural basis of fellowship, were, with very rare exceptions, in "a deep sleep." Methodism, ever regarding the church as a spiritual institution, has from the beginning, strongly insisted upon a change of heart as a necessary condition of membership. Class meetings and fellowship meetings, besides the other means of grace, are eminently calculated to promote genuine piety. Scriptural instruction is not only imparted in these meetings, but that instruction is definitely and directly applied to individual cases. The duties and privileges of the penitent and the believer are so clearly brought before the mind, and so steadily kept there; the experience which is related of the desires, the struggles, the anxieties of the seeker of salvation; and the overflowing joy of those who are walking in the light of God's countenance; are all powerfully calculated to arouse the soul, to encourage the penitent, to quicken the lukewarm, and to put the believer on ardent stretch for the full salvation. Our doctrinal views lead to the same result. A present salvation by faith in the blood of Christ; the direct witness of the Spirit; and

entire sanctification; lead to the formation of an active, fervid, and joyous piety. Such are the historic characteristics of "the people called Methodists;" and in these respects they closely resemble the simple and heavenly-minded disciples who *first believed* in the name of Jesus. Amongst other bodies there may be a higher order of education, and general literature; but in a knowledge of practical and experimental godliness, as set forth in the word of God, they are not surpassed by any; while their piety, appears to us to be of a more earnest and gladsome character. Herein is the strength and the glory of Methodism. The first and most imperative duty, therefore, which presses upon our churches, is to keep themselves free from the corrupting leaven of the world, and to be constantly pressing towards the mark of the prize of the high-calling of God in Christ Jesus. Piety needs retirement. Calm and solitary converse with God, the bible, the heart, and things eternal. The closet is the mount of spiritual transfiguration. Here it is the deeds of the body are mortified, holy affections are excited, the soul is girded for duty, and armed for spiritual conflict. By these exercises and influences our piety will not only be sustained, but become more robust, and manly, and be ever growing toward "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." While the pulpit faithfully enunciates those truths which enter into the common salvation, with all needful proofs, illustrations, and appeals, the classroom should clearly and constantly point out the bearing of these truths upon the experience and conduct of all our members; and by exhortation, faith, and prayer, labour to lead them into "this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Convinced that our meetings for Christian communion are as necessary and wise as they are scriptural, the attendance of all must be enforced and required. As there cannot be any change made in the mode of conducting these meetings without diminishing or destroying the blessing with which they are replete, and have ever bestowed; so neither must there be any relaxation of that discipline which requires that all our members

have a place there, and are regular in their attendance. Nevertheless, we must not allow class meetings and similar means of grace to lower in our esteem, and practical regard the ordinance of the Lord's supper. "The ways of Zion do mourn because none come to the solemn feasts." Not half the members of our churches make conscience of being regular in their attendance at this crowning ordinance of the gospel dispensation. This evil should be understood, and the remedy applied. Let fuller information be given by ministers and leaders concerning the nature, authority and claims of this ordinance; let special cases of error and perplexity be reasoned with; let the timid be encouraged, and the negligent reprov'd; then shall we express in His own appointed way, our gratitude, faith, and love, to that Saviour who has bought us with his blood, and whose command to his people of all generations is, "This do in remembrance of me."

Amid the prevalent practical infidelity of this age, when the populace is not only alienated from our sanctuaries, but can vent a malignant sneer at the ministers of religion, and spurn the restraints of christianity as the inventions of priestcraft; it is more than ordinarily incumbent upon us to *affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.* The daring impiety of the multitude strongly marked by ignorance, prejudice, and profligacy; whose source is found in the *carnal mind which is enmity against God*; may be most effectually reprov'd, silenced, and extirpated, by the upright and unblamable lives of the friends of Christ. There is a power, noiseless but convincing and subduing, in the living religion of the genuine disciple. No logic so convincing, no oratory so persuasive. "Do we begin again to commend ourselves? or need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle, written in our hearts, known and read of all men: forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in

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to declare and defend our principles, but to point out the mode in which those principles may be rendered most extensively contributory to the enlargement of the church and the glory of God. It is of importance that we be fully persuaded of the truth of our distinctive principles, so that our union with the body may be vital, the result of enlightened conviction; and not nominal, the result of education, or prejudice, or circumstances. Then will our attachment be strong, stable, and practical. The acknowledgement must not be withheld, that the possession of a larger measure of the spirit of apostolic churches, would have adorned our history with brighter and more triumphant passages. Be it so, that we have made advances, equal, considering our numbers; and greater, considering our circumstances, than the parent body of Methodists. Can this plea avail to our justification at the bar of God, or at the bar of individual judgement? The standard is unauthorized, defective, and must be repudiated. It is *comparing ourselves with ourselves*; a resort to which may be permitted, to parry an objection, and silence a sectarian boaster. To the law and the testimony. Let the decision be made in distinct view of New Testament commands; the example of the apostles and first disciples; the labours, sorrows, and death of him who has left us an example that we should tread in his steps — let there be a comparison of our providential and gracious gifts and opportunities with these laws and examples, and who will venture to affirm and defend the faithfulness of the Connexion? Vitiate the standard, apply a false rule, and we may solace lukewarmness, indolence, and selfishness. This would perpetuate a condition replete with the elements of weakness, inefficiency, and dishonor. If we wish to be healthful and prosperous we must seize the right standard, lift it up to its full dimensions, and aspire to reach its topmost point.

The Church is a society of believers in Jesus Christ. A union of hearts with each other in love, by virtue of their union by faith with that Saviour who is the Living Head of his people. Only those who are *sanctified in Christ Jesus*

and called to be saints are members of the Church. It is not the assumption of a name; the adoption of certain theological opinions; the maintenance of social morality; nor meeting with God's people in a particular sanctuary. *Ye must be born again. Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you.* To add to the church those, whom there is every warrant to believe have not experienced this change, may swell its numbers, and increase its secular pomp and influence. Such an association, however, could present no "pure offering," to Jehovah; and could neither administer scriptural discipline, nor accomplish the conversion of the world. To all the duties and ends for which the church exists it would be essentially unfitted. When Methodism started into full life and power, such was the condition of the churches in this country. In the Establishment, the principle of membership was territorial, and the church included the inhabitants of the parish; and non-conformist churches, while they recognized a scriptural basis of fellowship, were, with very rare exceptions, in "a deep sleep." Methodism, ever regarding the church as a spiritual institution, has from the beginning, strongly insisted upon a change of heart as a necessary condition of membership. Class meetings and fellowship meetings, besides the other means of grace, are eminently calculated to promote genuine piety. Scriptural instruction is not only imparted in these meetings, but that instruction is definitely and directly applied to individual cases. The duties and privileges of the penitent and the believer are so clearly brought before the mind, and so steadily kept there; the experience which is related of the desires, the struggles, the anxieties of the seeker of salvation; and the overflowing joy of those who are walking in the light of God's countenance; are all powerfully calculated to arouse the soul, to encourage the penitent, to quicken the lukewarm, and to put the believer on ardent stretch for the full salvation. Our doctrinal views lead to the same result. A present salvation by faith in the blood of Christ; the direct witness of the Spirit; and

entire sanctification; lead to the formation of an active, fervid, and joyous piety. Such are the historic characteristics of "the people called Methodists;" and in these respects they closely resemble the simple and heavenly-minded disciples who *first believed* in the name of Jesus. Amongst other bodies there may be a higher order of education, and general literature; but in a knowledge of practical and experimental godliness, as set forth in the word of God, they are not surpassed by any; while their piety, appears to us, to be of a more earnest and gladsome character. Herein is the strength and the glory of Methodism. The first and most imperative duty, therefore, which presses upon our churches, is to keep themselves free from the corrupting leaven of the world, and to be constantly pressing towards the mark of the prize of the high-calling of God in Christ Jesus. Piety needs retirement. Calm and solitary converse with God, the bible, the heart, and things eternal. The closet is the mount of spiritual transfiguration. Here it is the deeds of the body are mortified, holy affections are excited, the soul is girded for duty, and armed for spiritual conflict. By these exercises and influences our piety will not only be sustained, but become more robust, and manly, and be ever growing toward "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." While the pulpit faithfully enunciates those truths which enter into the common salvation, with all needful proofs, illustrations, and appeals, the classroom should clearly and constantly point out the bearing of these truths upon the experience and conduct of all our members; and by exhortation, faith, and prayer, labour to lead them into "this grace wherein we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Convinced that our meetings for Christian communion are as necessary and wise as they are scriptural, the attendance of all must be enforced and required. As there cannot be any change made in the mode of conducting these meetings without diminishing or destroying the blessing with which they are replete, and have ever bestowed; so neither must there be any relaxation of that discipline which requires that all our members

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fleshly tables of the heart." Have not the want of zeal, and the unguarded lives of the professed members of the church, not a little contributed to the production of this condition of society? The church has thrown stumbling blocks in the way of the world's salvation, and given it occasion to speak evil of the Son of God. "Many walk of whom I have told you often and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ; whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame; who mind earthly things." Godliness is more than a sentimental profession. It is a principle of holiness in the heart, and uniformly produces a scrupulous morality in all the relations of life, and the transactions of business. Let the introductory sections of our Rules be read and studied by all our members; they contain an admirable summary of scripture morals in all their features and bearings; let them also be occasionally read in the pulpit and class meeting. Taking heed to these counsels we shall throw over the sacred name and interests of our Holy Religion, an invulnerable shield; popular prejudice and infidelity will give way before the advancing light and power of *pure religion and undefiled*.

The christian ministry has been instituted not only to feed and rule the church, but also to bring the world to the *obedience of the faith*. Much as to the order and prosperity of the church depends upon the character of its ministry. The ministry may not be independent of the generation out of which it grows, to a greater or a less extent it will be modified by it; but to a much greater extent is the church acted upon and modified by the ministry. The doctrines preached; the discipline administered; the character exhibited by the minister; are so many sources and forms of influence, which will manifest itself in the condition of the church. Methodism grew up under the direct influence of the ministry, and perhaps owes more than any churches since the days of the apostles, to their character and labours. Hence it derived its highest characteristics, and it now stands a striking monument to the power of a faithful ministry.

There are serious mistakes prevalent amongst us, as to the character and training of the first Methodist preachers. Throughout the entire system of nature there is a beautiful selection and adaptation of means to ends, — of instrumentality to a given result. So far as we can understand, this perfect harmony, is everywhere operating. So it is in the economy of grace. There are diversities of gifts answering to the diversified wants of the church. 1 Cor. xii., 4, &c. Jehovah does not compensate the defectiveness, or control the perverseness of an instrumentality, by the interposition of miraculous power. No. He manifests his wisdom in the selection of an instrument well fitted for the work to be performed. So it was with the apostles, and the principle is no less obvious as regards the founders of Methodism. The Wesleys, Whitfield, Fletcher, Grimshaw, Benson, and their sainted coadjutors were men of vigorous understandings, thorough education, sound learning, and some of them endowed with eminent rhetorical powers, which, combined with fervent piety and zeal, qualified them for the work given them to do. It was not piety and zeal merely, which rendered them so extensively useful: these doubtless, elevated, controlled, and concentrated, their mental and moral powers, with their scientific and literary accomplishments; inspired them with a tender and ever active sympathy with perishing souls; and obtained those abundant divine influences by which they became everywhere a *sweet savour of Christ*. In them were seen, in a wonderful degree, mental and moral powers, which united, made them *burning and shining lights*. What a calamity to the church, and to the interests of Christianity at large, when the pastors are novices, and the people will have it so. The teacher of others should not be a babe, the ruler of the church should not be ignorant of the ordinances of Christ. There is no sphere on this side eternity, in which the most powerful intellect, developed by education, and enriched by science, and literature, can move, so pregnant with high themes of inquiry; there is no service to which such a mind, when *renewed* by the *Holy Ghost*, can devote

itself so noble, as that of making known the *mystery of Godliness, and feeding the church of God which he has purchased with his blood.* To render this service, such men are imperatively called for. We say not that in all there should be eminent talents and learning, but there should be in all comprehensive and exact scriptural knowledge, with adequate powers of utterance, and learning in a few. The priest's lips should *keep knowledge*; the minister should *reason* on righteousness, temperance, and a judgement to come; he should *persuade* men.

As the church is bound to perpetuate in uncorrupted simplicity the ordinances instituted by Jesus Christ and his apostles; so is it the duty of the church to select, train, and send forth, fit men to preside over and conduct these ordinances. The pulpit ought not to be left to the casualties of the everchanging circumstances of the church, which is too much the case amongst us. The consequence is, under the pressure of an urgent necessity, arising from the fact that a fixed amount of public religious services has to be maintained, hands are laid suddenly on men; the church becomes faint and sickly; congregations fall away; and Christianity is dishonoured. These deplorable results can be prevented only by a systematic provision. There ought to be in every circuit, an institution for the training of local preachers, having attached to it a good library; and the superintendent minister should be the president. There should be a similar institution also in the connexion, for the training of circuit preachers.

We rejoice, therefore, that the Conference, after the fullest investigation of the subject, and with the almost unanimous vote of the circuits, has resolved to appropriate a portion of the Jubilee Fund, to this important object. No apprehensions can be reasonably entertained, while the warmest hopes may be cherished, as to its influence upon the condition and destiny of the Connexion. The circuits must be well assured of the piety, zeal, and general ability of the young men they recommend. In the constitution *and management* of the establishment, there should be

combined, with the severe pursuits of biblical and classical learning, all the peculiar influences of Methodistic theology, and means of grace; and plentiful opportunities should be provided in the neighbouring towns and villages for the students to exercise their gifts, and make proof of their call to the ministry. Let this be done, and we shall have a race of ministers who will be both willing and able to labour in the word and doctrine, with all the simplicity, zeal, and perseverance of the fathers of Methodism. In these statements we do no dishonour to our brethren, we implicate no reproach, nor insinuate any unfaithfulness. Many of them would do honour to any Protestant community; and God has put his seal to their call to the holy office, by making them extensively useful in the conversion of souls. But looking at the state of civil society in this country; the success with which science is being popularized; the extension of libraries; and the able lectures which are being everywhere and incessantly delivered; who does not perceive that a great change has come over our social condition: and nothing but a talented, and educated, and earnest, as well as pious ministry can enable us to retain our position with credit, and give us an influence over the mass; especially over those young men who are destined to be the great actors in the forthcoming generation, and whom it is of the utmost importance to enlist on the side of evangelic Christianity. In those broad and busy centres of life, intelligence, and wealth, into which our population is being gathered, nothing can give us influence, and raise our churches to a position equal to other bodies, and in which we shall be strong, buoyant, and prosperous, but a succession of able and devoted ministers. Be it so, that some of our ministers have trained themselves, and acquired a respectable standing. They are few, and alas! how many called into the itinerancy in early life, possessing average native powers, but under the pressure of the difficulties of their new calling, at all times arduous, which were not foreseen by them, and to sustain which they were but very imperfectly qualified, have dragged through a few

circuits, and then retired in shame and sorrow. Others have struggled with these difficulties till health has given way; and while the dew of youth was upon them, have retired from the vineyard to sicken, and die. But should there be no failure of purpose or of health, even then the time which is spent in the acquisition of the mere elements of learning, must inevitably be taken from those hours which ought to be devoted to pastoral duties; and thus one of the most important branches of ministerial duties, and for which the times especially call, is neglected. It is in this view that we hail the Institution as pregnant with the richest blessings to the connexion.*

If so much of the welfare of the community, depends, under God, upon the character and labours of the ministry, ought not every parent to consecrate, and train his child for this great work. There is an evil amongst us, strongly marked by worldliness. How few of those families blessed with riches, emulate the example of the mother of Samuel. They wish to see their sons and daughters aggrandized in the world; and to accomplish this result, education, and domestic influence are scrupulously directed. Because we have no mitres to bestow, and no wealthy livings at command, "not many mighty, not many noble are called." Parents and guardians should *covet* for their children, and teach their children to covet for themselves *the best gifts, but*

* "The priesthood of Christianity, — in which we include all men who preach the gospel — must ever be more or less a priesthood of learning, of science, and of everything humanizing. Hence, to realize its proper mission, must be to perpetuate its real strength. It is only from imbecility or from baseness, that men of this order can be subject to fear. It belongs to them to hail the light as their natural element and home. There are no seeds of improvement in humanity which are not found in the gospel. No progress has been made by man which the gospel has not anticipated. All progress in the time to come will be no more than a development of the design of this heaven-born system. The destiny of man is to rise to this level. He cannot ascend higher. Let the Ministers of Christianity, therefore, be also, in the extent demanded by their age, a priesthood of letters: and in the advances of knowledge and refinement, we see only a guarantee for the prevalence of revealed religion." — *British Quarterly* No. VI. p. 286.

above all to prophesy. The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few. Far be that condition of the church from us, when our pulpits may be usurped by the unregenerate sons of the wealthy, and be degraded by cupidity and ambition; and equally far that state, when our ministry shall be thought an unworthy sphere, for the most gifted children, surrounded by the brightest prospects of worldly distinction.

Intimately connected with the prosperity of our churches is the religious education of the young. In them we see the rudiments of the next generation, the elements which shall be moulded into the life of the forthcoming age. That mass is wondrously ductile—capable of impression and impulse. The present is the mould of the future, and singularly does that future reflect, and repeat the past. Not more truly does the child inherit the physical features, and temperament, and oftentimes the moral and mental peculiarities of the parent, than the next generation derives its cardinal characteristics from the present. There may be a few who deflect from the one line, like those rugged and bold rocks which lift their wild forms to the sky, having been borne from the native stratum in which they once slept, by the violent outburst of some subterranean force. But though there may be a few, who, by native powers or the revolutions of society, may distinguish themselves, they only illustrate and confirm the fact, how uniformly one generation follows another. How important are just views here; and how important to respect the childhood and youth by which we are surrounded; to shed upon them those influences, and impregnate their minds with those truths which may fully prepare them for the duties and ends of life.

To the youth of our congregations and homes we must look for replenishing and extending our churches. This is a mine of untold wealth, hitherto worked to only a very limited extent, and in a very imperfect manner. The Church of Rome has manifested a juster estimate of youth, and adopted a far wiser and more successful policy. The infantine understanding is carefully instructed in her dog-

mas ; the conscience and will are disciplined to bow to her authority as being the voice of God ; the fears are acted upon by her dreaded anathemas ; and the whole soul is filled with veneration for her, as being the only true church, — ancient, universal, infallible. In youth the soul is more susceptible of bias than at any subsequent period, and impressions made upon it, are vivid, powerful, and enduring. Herein Protestantism has much to learn.

The homes of our members should be nurseries for our churches. How urgent, frequent, and solemn are the exhortations which the word of God addresses to parents, to *train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord*. It was the opinion of Baxter, that if parents and heads of families faithfully performed their duties, the family would yield more members to the church than the services of the sanctuary. It is not sufficient that parents take their children with them to the house of God, restrain them from Sabbath-breaking, and evil company ; religious influences should be brought to bear directly upon them. The reading of the scriptures should be improved by explanatory remarks and occasional questions ; the prayer should be short and simple, and should refer to the incidents which may be occurring in the family. Singing should be introduced, where practicable ; it will add much to the interest of the service, and prepare the family to join more freely in the praises of the sanctuary. We much like the practice of catechising children on the sermons they hear ; and also the doctrines, duties, facts, and privileges of Christianity. Could this practice be revived, it would prove a great blessing to both parents and children. It is well to take the children apart, occasionally, and converse with them in the presence of God, about the soul, Jesus Christ, a judgement to come, the glorious provision which God has set forth in the gospel, through the death of his only begotten Son, to make them holy and happy for ever. What constitutes real worth in character ; what are the elements of true happiness ; and what are the objects which life has been given to accomplish ; should be

fully and frequently explained : and the interview should always end in an act of prayer, in which the child is again dedicated to God, and His blessing implored upon him. These interviews will quicken the conscience and keep it tender ; connect the understanding and affections with the sublime objects of religion, and will most powerfully contribute to mould the character into forms of excellency, to fit for the duties of this world, and for the high destinies of eternity.

But the uniform manifestation of a holy example in the household is of paramount importance. There may be the morning and the evening sacrifice, attendance at the sanctuary may be regular, and wise counsel frequently given, but the whole may be neutralized by a defective example. Religion should not be a separate subsistence, occasionally introduced to serve a purpose, as masks are worn ; it should be the soul, the life of the family — ever present, pervading, controlling, exalting, and blessing the whole. It should not only be summoned to soothe and cheer in times of affliction and adversity ; but its voice should blend with the merriest mood, and it should shed “sweet glories” on those moments, when the loved ones meet, and affection gushes from warm and full hearts, and sparkles in the gleams of pleasant wit and humour. Religion thus incorporated with the family, will manifest itself in their conversation, tempers, and entire intercourse with each other. By its living influence, ever-working, like light and heat, whose vital energy impregnates the world’s atmosphere, the children will grow up like Samuel and Timothy, adorned with features of loveliness, a seed to serve God in their generation. Let parents elevate their desires for their children’s welfare to their only proper objects, — their conversion to God, and union with His Church ; let them bring religion to bear upon them in all the variety of its divine influences ; and exemplify it in all its attractions ; let them plead with God for the bestowment of His coveted blessings, — *the promise is unto you, and to your children ;* — then, *instead of the fathers will be the children,* and our Zion shall perpetually renew her youth.

While the ordinance of baptism is administered in our churches, according to scripture precedent, our practice is utterly at variance with the nature of the ordinance. The children baptized are received into the visible communion of the church, of which their baptism is the public sign and seal. The children thus baptized are generally, absolutely neglected by the church. No record is kept of the fact of their baptism; no inquiries made after them; and we have no systematic provision for their religious instruction. It is not to be wondered, while such a state of things exists, that comparatively few of those who have been baptized, consummate, when they have arrived at years of maturity, their covenant engagements. The church, in this respect is lamentably defective in its discipline, and the consequences are too obvious to be denied, and too lamentable not to be deplored. The children baptized are as really members of our church, as the adult whose name is on our roll, and they ought to be the objects of the church's fostering care, and pastoral oversight. "That infants should be baptized, and then be left by ministers and churches in a situation undistinguishable from that of other children, appears to me irreconcilable with any scriptural views of the nature and importance of this sacrament."* "The children of professing Christians are already in the church. They were born members. Their baptism did not make them such. It was a public ratification of their membership, and a recognition of it. They were baptized because they were members. They received the seal of the covenant because they were already in covenant by virtue of their birth. This blessed privilege is their 'birth-right.' Of course, then, the only question they can ask themselves, is not — 'Shall we enter the church, and be connected with Christ's family?' but — 'Shall we continue in it, or act the part of ungrateful deserters? Shall we be thankful for the privilege, and gratefully recognize and confirm it by our own act; or shall we renounce our baptism, disown and

* Dwight.

deny a Saviour in whose name we have been enrolled as members of his family, and become open apostates from that family ?

“ This is the real question to be decided, and truly a solemn question it is ! Baptized young people ! think of this ; you have been in the bosom of the church ever since you drew your first breath. The seal of God's covenant has been placed upon you. You cannot, if you would, escape from the responsibility of this relation ! You may forget it ; you may hate to think of it ; you may despise it ; but still the obligation lies upon you ; you cannot throw it off. Your situation is solemn beyond expression ! On the one hand, to go forward and recognize your obligation by a personal profession, without any love to the Saviour, is to insult him by a heartless offering ; and on the other, to remove your allegiance by refusing to acknowledge him, by turning your back on his ordinances, and by indulging in that course of life by which his religion is dishonoured, is certainly, whether you realize it or not, to deny him before men, and to incur the fearful guilt of apostacy, of drawing back unto perdition.”*

These are the words of truth and soberness. Ponder them. They set forth, most luminously, the relation of baptized children to the church, in their privileges and responsibilities. Let us hear the judgement of Dr. Dwight, than whom few greater lights have appeared in the firmament of the universal church, on the duties of ministers, churches and parents, to those who have been baptized. “ Ministers ought, in my view, to make it a business of their ministerial office distinctly to unfold to them the nature of their relation to God, and his church ; and solemnly to enforce on them the duties arising from this relation : particularly the duties of repentance and faith in the Redeemer ; of giving themselves up to God in his covenant ; and taking upon themselves openly, the character of Christians. This I apprehend should be done not only from the desk, but in a regular

* Dr. Millar, vide Campbell's Jethro.

course of catechetical instruction. The same things should be explicitly and solemnly enjoined, from time to time, upon the parents; one of whose first duties it is, in my apprehension, to co-operate faithfully with their ministers in teaching and enjoining these things upon their children. Were these things began as soon as the children were capable of understanding them, and pursued through every succeeding period of their non-age, a fair prospect, as it seems to me, would be opened for the vigorous growth and abundant fruitfulness of this nursery of the church."

"I will further suggest that in my own view it is a part of the duty of each church, at their meetings for evangelical conversation and prayer, to summons the baptized persons who are minors to be present at convenient seasons, while the church offers up prayers to God peculiarly for them; and to pray for them particularly, at other meetings holden for these purposes."

The object of this exhortation is now partially realized. "What a beautiful sight is exhibited in some of the American churches, assembling once a quarter, the baptized children in the body of the church; their guardians in the galleries, and the elders of the church before the pulpit and the pastor addressing them severally upon their obligations."*

This voice speaks in both reproof and counsel to the whole community; and happy will it be for us, if we can succeed in rousing attention, provoking inquiry, and accomplishing a full reformation. No part of the field of our labour promises to yield so abundant a harvest; and no part has been so long, and so entirely neglected. All efforts to remedy the evil must be founded upon a system, comprehensive, thorough, and connexional. Every thing below this, however well meant, will be limited in its range, irregular in its operation, and altogether unsatisfactory in its results.

Sabbath schools have now existed for upwards of half a

* Christian Observer, as quoted in Jethro.

century, and have doubtless accomplished extensive good. But we are not blind to the fact, nor can we conceal it, that they have failed to accomplish that amount of good which the auspices of their birth promised, and for which they are eminently fitted. Not only is there a defect in the kind of instruction given, and a want of adaptation in that instruction to work repentance unto salvation, but there is a want of enlightened endeavour on the part of the teachers to accomplish the conversion of the children committed to their care. This is not the object they propose or expect to accomplish, and consequently, it is seldom realized. How rare are conversions in Sabbath schools! The question is not, how many of those who are now members of our churches were once scholars; but how many of those who are members, have been converted in the Sabbath school, and by its direct and single instrumentality? Candour compels us to say, the number is very small. We have about forty-thousand children taught in our schools. In about eight years these will be replaced by forty-thousand others. The question arises, what becomes of those who leave the school? Our congregations and churches do not receive them. The increase in these departments is very small. The conclusion, however repugnant to our feelings, and self-flattering assumptions, however it may prove the inefficiency of Sabbath school instruction, the conclusion is inevitable, that the majority of those children go away to swell the number of strolling sabbath-breakers, pleasure seeking worldlings, and practical infidels. What a lamentable issue! Nor is it difficult to account for this issue. There is generally — we speak that we do know — a want of a clear and full exhibition of gospel truth to the children; the teacher does not aim at and pray for their conversion. When these children reach the age of fourteen or fifteen years, they feel themselves too old to be scholars, they are not competent to be teachers; and they escape from the school as from a position both irksome and disgraceful. Having derived only very imperfect advantages, they are bound to neither chapel nor school by the ties of gratitude, affection, and religion, but are lost to both.

To prevent these consequences, a wise and well-worked system is needed, for the case of those scholars just rising into manhood. This is confessedly the most important period of their life; a period beset by the most powerful temptations, and the most imminent moral dangers. This is a period which demands special vigilance and care. Preparatory classes, as they exist in most schools, do not reach the necessity. The catechumen classes, with which the name of the Rev. Robert Jackson stands honourably associated, appear to us, both in their principle and detail, to be admirably calculated for the object they contemplate. Were the plan adopted, and fully carried out in all our circuits, it would do more than any other single institution amongst us, to increase our numbers, influence, and usefulness. These classes should be placed under the authority and control of the leaders' meeting; and their practical management vested in the superintendent preacher. Almost every thing, as to success, will depend upon the character of the catechists. These should be pious, zealous, affectionate; generally intelligent, and having an enlarged acquaintance with the Holy Scriptures; active in their habits; and who will enter upon their work and prosecute it, with enthusiastic earnestness and perseverance.

Impressions made on the infantine mind in the Sabbath school are frequently impaired or destroyed during the intervening days of the week. Day schools conducted by pious and properly trained teachers, who are members of our own body, would give much greater efficiency to the plans above suggested. A circle, full of the best influences, would thus constantly enclose our youth; protecting them from the evil which is in the world, and fostering all those holy principles and dispositions which, under the agency of the Divine Spirit, may be taking root in their souls. The day school would thus co-operate with the Sabbath school, and both united with the church, and receiving the frequent visits and services of the ministers, would become a prolific nursery for our Zion.

The period has arrived, when into this new field we must

enter, and establish day schools for the children of the working classes, in all those towns and populous villages where we have societies. Every church, it seems to us, should, in the present condition of civil society in this country, make adequate provision for the education of its children: an education based upon Holy Scripture. All communities are now awaking to the importance of this work; and some of them are adopting plans on a large and liberal scale for its accomplishment. And if we are to preserve and improve our position, we must not remain inactive. The reduction of our chapel debts, which we trust will go forward to a liquidation, will place at our disposal, funds, to assist in this, as well as other important objects.

The present condition of the Connexion, demands that special and systematic attention be paid to young men. The weakest point in our body, as it appears to us, is the want of eligible young men to fill the offices of our churches. We are suffering incalculably from this cause. To be weak here, is to be strong nowhere. It is not the condition of one society or one circuit, it is the general condition of the Connexion. Our local enterprizes are imperfectly carried out; and in not a few cases all enterprize is avoided; for were it attempted, in the want of a suitable agency, it must necessarily end in disappointment and disgrace. The ministry is crippled, the people are discouraged, and the cause is stunted and stationary. We need a more lively conviction of the value of young men, as a class of labourers in the Lord's vineyard. They stand alone and peerless. In them we see our future ministry, our leaders, local preachers, stewards, Sabbath school teachers; and on them must devolve the institutions and enterprizes of the Connexion, with all their labours and responsibilities. Around our young men gather our hopes, anxieties; and upon them, humanly speaking, wait the destinies of the Connexion. They are the type of that which it shall be in the far future.

Not only does the Connexion need to be more justly impressed on this point, but young men should be fully and frequently instructed, as to the position in which Providence

MEMORANDUM

The following information was obtained from a review of the records of the [redacted] and is being furnished to you for your information. It is noted that [redacted] has been [redacted] since [redacted] and has been [redacted] since [redacted]. It is also noted that [redacted] has been [redacted] since [redacted] and has been [redacted] since [redacted].

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Very truly yours,
[redacted]

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has placed them, in its relations, duties, and responsibilities. Much may be done by parents, ministers, and leaders, to attach them to the Connexion, and excite them to those endeavours after self-improvement which may qualify them for spheres of usefulness. Still, whatever may be done by private individuals, and however well done, must fail to accomplish any extensive and permanent results. We think it extremely important and desirable, to form associations of young men, in all those towns which stand at the head of circuits, and to radiate branches into all the minor towns. They should be organized and established under the authority of Conference; the superintendent preachers being made responsible for their institution and management, in their respective circuits. The local preacher's library, before referred to, might be so enlarged, as to become available for these associations. The object of these associations should be, to fit young men for being efficient officers, and to induct them into spheres of actual labour. They should be divided into classes, and meet weekly or oftener, for instruction in reading, writing, grammar, arithmetic, geography, composition, history, natural philosophy, and other branches of useful learning. There should also be a theological class, specially devoted to divinity and ecclesiastical history. Stated lectures should be given by ministers and competent laymen. Quarterly or annual meetings should be held, to report proceedings, and encourage to increased effort. These associations should be connected with tract societies, local prayer meetings, Sunday schools, and the Mission. As soon as any young men are qualified, they should be brought forward as assistant leaders and stewards; and be carried forward to higher offices, as their gifts improve. Having something to do for the cause, will give an enduring freshness to the association, without which, the members will become weary in well-doing. It cannot be supposed that the superintendent, even when assisted by his colleagues, can take charge of all these classes; but we believe there may be found amongst us, a sufficient number of laymen possessing competent ability, leisure and zeal,

who will gladly help in so important a work. If we are to build the walls of our Zion; if the offices vacated by those whom God is taking to their reward, or who are incapacitated by infirmities, are to be well filled; if we are to have an agency, to carry out in full efficiency, the machinery of Methodism; if we are to enlarge the place of our tent; and be faithful witnesses for God in the world;—if these paramount objects are to be accomplished, then, some such plan as that we have indicated must be adopted, and energetically prosecuted.

We plead for this course the more earnestly, forasmuch as we deem it to be the solemn duty of the Connexion, to do more than it has yet done to extend the kingdom of Christ. The spirit of aggression has long slumbered in our churches. During some years gone, we have been reposing within ancient boundaries. By division, we may have increased the number of our circuits. We have also rebuilt and enlarged many chapels. But for a number of years the Connexion has remained within nearly the same geographical limits. A wide surface has stretched on every side of us, thronged with immortal souls, for whom Jesus Christ has shed his blood, who are perishing for lack of knowledge. To establish and maintain a polity in strictest accordance with the word of God, were but worthless, as a sole and ultimate object. We exist as a community, for the higher purpose of making *manifest the savour of his knowledge by us, in every place*. But where are the proofs of our sanctified patriotism, yearning compassion for souls, and zeal for the Redeemer's glory? We may not have been wanting in fervid zeal for the liberties of the church, but have we been equally earnest and active about the conversion of souls?

In this land so singularly blessed by the gracious providence of God, as to be eminently the "Garden of the Lord;" where Wickliffe preached; which Ridley, Latimer, and many others have consecrated by martyr's blood; where the Sabbath is made a national institute; and thousands of ministers are maintained to preach the gospel; and the bible is extensively circulated in our own language;—this land, which

for many centuries has had within itself the marvellous light, and the regenerating influences of the gospel; is yet as regards the greater part of its population, *lying in wickedness*. And among the congregated multitudes of our large towns may be seen a hardened infidelity, entrenched in the prejudices, and passions of the carnal mind; and loathsome abominations are practised, of which it is a *shame to speak*. Here, emphatically, is *Satan's seat*. "Beautiful as they often are — rich, splendid, magnificent; the home of refinement, courtesy, accomplishment; the seat of science, and the nurse of the arts; I add, too, with thankfulness to God, the home often of deep piety, and rich and liberal-hearted benevolence; yet they are the home also of every kind of infamy, of all that is false and hollow, and of all that fascinates, allures, and corrupts the hearts of men. There are found men of all nations, colours, characters, opinions. There men of splendid talents live to corrupt by their example and their influence; there unbounded wealth is lavished to amuse, betray, and ruin the soul; there are the vortices of business and pleasure that engulf all; and there are the most degraded, and the worst forms of human depravity." "I might go over the whole catalogue of crimes that are marked on the calender of human guilt, and we should find them all concentrated, organized, consolidated in our cities and large towns. There foul and offensive exhalations rise from the receptacles of human depravity; there volumes of curses roll up toward heaven; there the seducer practises his arts to inveigle the young; there tens of thousands riot in intemperance and curse their Maker; there multitudes practise all arts of fraud and infamy; and there Satan, knowing the power of cities, in all the surrounding regions, has established his strongholds; and fortifies and guards his possessions with all that skill and art can do."*

Towns are powerful centres, from which influences are extended to the vicinal and rural population. "Cities in a nation, are like the heart in man. Each stroke at the

* Albert Barnes on Revivals.

centre of life, sends out influences for good or evil to the extremities, and is felt with healthful or destructive influence there." Though we gratefully acknowledge that towns are doing much to influence, and elevate, both mentally and religiously, the inhabitants of their surrounding villages, yet it is to be feared that far more is being done to corrupt and degrade them. And it is to be deplored, that in consequence of the facilities of access to towns, furnished by railways, and the thousands which are poured forth every Sabbath-day, through these channels, into the country, those vices which were peculiar to towns, are being extensively transplanted into the villages: and our villages, in the depth, variety, and hardihood of their depravity, are rapidly assimilating the large towns.

Towns, therefore demand our first and principal attention. To towns Jesus Christ directed a large portion of his labours; and it was the *cities wherein most of his mighty works were done*. To towns Jesus Christ sent his apostles, and in the most populous and renowned cities of the world, the standard of the cross was first unfurled, and won its noblest triumphs — Jerusalem, the third city of the age; Antioch the capital of Syria; Ephesus, the capital of pro-consular Asia; Derbe; Lystra; Iconium; Smyrna, the chief commercial city of Asia Minor, and the "crown of Ionia;" Pergamos, a splendid metropolis under the regal line of Attalus; Sardis, the capital of the wealthy Croesus; Philippi, the chief city of Macedonia; and in Thessalonica; Athens; Corinth; and Rome, the palace of the lofty Cæsars. The apostles acted under the commission of infinite wisdom, and in thus labouring to convert cities and towns, what other reasons could determine their course but these — towns contain the largest number of human beings, and are also centres of moral influence; so that in imbuing them first with the spirit of the gospel, christianity would the more rapidly and effectually reach and regenerate the whole community, and subdue the world to *obedience of the faith*. This was the course which Wesley and Whitfield adopted, they worked chiefly in the large towns — London, Bristol, Bath, Newcastle, Ply-

mouth, &c. &c., and as wise master builders we must adopt the same policy. "Cities are, and will be, the centres of moral power; and their influence must be felt over all other portions of the world. Missionaries now go to great cities just as the apostles, and begin their work there. It is in such places as Constantinople, and Jerusalem, and Calcutta, and Canton, and Baanukok, and Cairo, that the triumphs of the gospel are expected; and to secure such places of influence is deemed as needful as it is for an invading army to seize upon the strong fortresses of a land. In our own country, therefore, and in other lands, christians are to labour and pray now, as the apostles did, for the promotion of religion in cities, and large towns." *

Looking at the inhabitants of these towns, not in their relation to the extension of our community, merely, but in their more solemn relation to God and eternity, whose bosom does not burn with the holy excitement of the apostle Paul when he visited Athens, and "his spirit was stirred in him, when he saw the city wholly given to idolatry." When realizing the tremendous fact that thousands of these are every day and every hour passing into eternity; victims of their own vices, and the victims of the *worm that never dies*; who does not feel his heart subdued and broken, like that of the Redeemer, who, seated on the Mount of Olives, contemplated the devoted city of Jerusalem, and as he foresaw the judgments which were collecting around it, and ready to explode to its utter overthrow, poured forth the compassions of his heart in a flood of tears.

We rejoice the Conference has resolved to appropriate two thousand pounds of the Jubilee Fund to the establishment of a Home Mission. Although we have existed for more than half a century, yet there is more than half the surface of England in which we have no name; and that surface includes some of the largest and most important towns in the empire. This fact is a humbling proof, as it appears to us, of our want of that spirit which glowed in the

* Barnea.

primitive church, and which characterized the early history of Methodism. John Wesley, writing to Mr. Tattershall, indicates the true spirit of Methodism, and which was remarkably exemplified in himself, "*Try as many new places as you can, with any probability of success. You know it is our peculiar calling,*

To rush through every open door and cry,
Sinners, behold the Lamb.*

The inhabitants of these towns, thousands of whom are imbruted in ignorance, vice, and wretchedness ; have claims upon us more urgent, and promise to reward our zeal by results far greater than can arise from the same amount of labour and expense devoted to Polynesia, Africa, or China. We go to these places, not to rally round a hostile standard, stained with faction, and which is wildly floating in the gusts of tumultuous passion. We go at the bidding of Him who has said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." We go, impelled by a Saviour's love to seek and save that which is lost. We have no symbol but the cross ; no message but the faithful saying worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners ; and no object but that of converting a sinner from the error of his ways. This is the true spirit of Christian enterprise. A spirit far above the low sphere of sectarian turmoil, whose convictions and ardours, can neither be extinguished nor enfeebled by labour, privation, or suffering ; but which blending its sympathies with those of the Redeemer, ever prosecutes the one consummation, when the world shall be filled with the glory of the Lord.

We enter these towns not to make proselytes ; not to propagate the speculations of a creed ; not to extend the peculiarities of our discipline and church order ; not to court the wealthy and the refined ; we go to save the souls of the ignorant, the debased, the wretched, and neglected poor. That is the mine we must work. There, Methodism, in the beginning, gathered its brightest gems ; and after a hundred years we still refer to its labours, and triumphs

* Memoir of Dr. Tattershall, p. 38

among our "Home Heathens," as being the most illustrious facts in its history. Methodism has been raised up by God for the especial benefit of the poor; and as Methodists our legitimate sphere is among the poor. From their ranks, though now reduced to the lowest depths of pollution and degradation, we shall raise up a middle class, who are the flower of a nation — the stronghold of liberty and religion. A periodical distinguished for its literary ability, and also for the wisdom and faithfulness with which it sets forth the duties and interests of evangelical dissenters, makes the following candid and just remarks. "Methodism was eminently the religion of the multitude; and to the Methodism of the last century, we owe nearly all the earnest Christianity of the present. The scepticisms of the educated must not be allowed to divert our attention from the condition of the wider classes below them. The press, as we have seen, is, to a large extent, the press of the people; and the pulpit must, in at least an equal degree, be the pulpit of the people. No blunder could be more egregious than that of attempting to convert the subtle speculators of our time, at the cost of neglecting the comparatively unsophisticated mass of society."*

Up to the present period the connexion has been without any formal provision for the enlargement of its borders. This has hitherto depended, mainly, upon individual, or circuit enterprise. If the Connexion have moved, it has generally been at the call of dissidents from another body. In some instances, and we rejoice to acknowledge them, — they are an honour to our community — we may have succeeded, but in others, the result has been, discomfiture and disgrace. We cannot expect any large and rapid increase of numbers in our present circuits. We must go into the *regions beyond*. By the prudent and earnest prosecution of the object, set forth in the Home Mission, we shall transfuse new life and energy into the body; elicit its prayers, faith, and liberality; multiply its resources for yet more arduous service; and join our hands with those of other communi-

* British Quarterly Review, No. VI, p. 314.

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* Memoir of Dr. Tattershall, p. 38

highest sense and application of that term. We did wisely in going to Ireland, and thence to Canada; but we should have sped onward with accelerated zeal to the lands in the *region and shadow of death*. Nor can it be reasonably said that we are proposing to rob the churches at home; for the reflex influence of such a mission upon us will be most conspicuous and benignant. "If the receivers of the gospel have been blessed, those who sent it have experienced that it is still more blessed to give than to receive; and before the distant regions of the earth are likely to be turned to the knowledge of the truth, England herself will be evangelized in the act of evangelizing other nations."* This is a noble sentiment, and accords with a fixed law of both providence and grace. "Freely ye have received, freely give." "The liberal soul shall be made fat, and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself." To labour earnestly for the extension of Christ's kingdom abroad, is the most effectual method of improving the churches at home. Our own history, and the history of the universal church, prove this to be true.

With unfeigned satisfaction we record the resolution of the Conference, to apply one thousand pounds as an outfit for a mission to the heathen. Many doors *wide and effectual* are open to us, and nations *waiting for his law*, invite us to enter. India, China, Africa, the whole pagan world, savage and semi-civilized. Other communities who have preceded us, will not repulse, but greet our entrance into the field where they have been long and honourably labouring, and will assist us by their counsels and prayers. A just and comprehensive view of the nature and purposes of Christ's mediation, in connection with a correct knowledge of the moral condition of the world, cannot fail, when the heart is right in the sight of God, to produce a zeal for the Redeemer's glory, and a compassion for perishing souls, so intense, habitual, and commanding, as to subordinate everything — leisure, talents, property, influence,

* *Advancement of Society*, by Douglas.

and prayers, to the attainment of its object. Let us receive and cherish these views and principles; let them become the sacred inheritance, not of one heart, but of all hearts; then the whole Connexion will swell and throb with a self-absorbing passion, like that of the Redeemer, when he said, "I have a baptism to be baptized with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished." This will be a new epoch in our history, the opening of a chapter more replete with facts illustrative of the power of the gospel and the gracious interpositions of Jehovah, than any we yet possess; and will approximate us to the condition of the church when fresh with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, *they went everywhere preaching the word.*

At the period of the Reformation in the sixteenth century, a power was discovered of wondrous resources to move and bless the world; greatly did it assist the noble-minded men who fought the battles of freedom and religion, against the assumptions of Popery: since that period it has vastly augmented its strength, and widened its dominion; and now it wields the most dominant moral influence in the world — it is THE PRESS. The first issues from the magician's office, were slow, and very costly. Only few could purchase, and only few could read. But the discoveries of science have guided the skilful industry of mechanics; and by the application of machinery and new mechanical forces, the press now multiplies its productions by thousands, and has cheapened them in the same proportion. Education has joined hands with the press; and, whereas, formerly, there was one reader in a parish, there are now readers in every household; and books which were to be seen only in the mansion of the nobleman, or on the table of the wealthy citizen, are become the inheritance of the cottage, and the daily companions of the coarse clad labourer. It is to be regretted that the power of the press is to a large extent in the service of Infidelity, Immorality, and Seditious. In those cases where its pages are not stained with positive error and vice, they are loaded with crude sentimentalities, which generate a morbid imagination;

and are thus indirectly stultifying the minds of our youth, and unfitting them for the sober and rough realities of life. When will the church awake to a correct estimate of the power of the press ; and with a lusty hand rescue it from its present servile prostitution ; and consecrate it to the service of truth, freedom, and religion ? Those men who have lived since the invention of printing, and who have sought to influence public opinion and action, have summoned the press to their assistance. Luther not only preached, but he wrote books ; and by the press he spoke to multitudes whom his voice could not reach ; and by the press, mainly, he aroused and concentrated the indignation of a long oppressed people, which issued in the dethronement of the Man of Sin. Wesley not only preached with his living voice in streets, fields, and churches ; but at an early period of his career, he published sermons, and pamphlets ; and he continued a busy use of the press to the end of his days. By the press he corrected the false prejudices of some ; obtained access to persons, and places otherwise beyond his reach ; greatly extended the sphere of his usefulness ; and by the faithful press, his name and influence still live, and will be perpetuated till the end of time.

There never was a period when the public mind was so active and so eager, as now, in the pursuit of knowledge. Our own community yields to the general stimulus ; and is seeking gratification in a sound and cheap literature. Ought not the Connexion to supply this acknowledged want ? We have a Book-room, capable of rendering immense service to the interests of the Connexion, and of Christianity in general, but it lacks enterprize. It is a purely mercantile establishment, whose policy is directed to make money ; and it is valued by the Connexion just in proportion as it brings money to the Conference. A religious soul must be implanted in it. It may be desirable, and important that it return support to our funds, and we would not overlook this ; but there are moral benefits which it may bestow upon the body, infinitely beyond the price of rubies. Hitherto

its business has been limited to the publication of our Hymn Books, Rules, and the two Magazines. We want a cheap periodical to circulate among our young people, and poorer members. We want a series of catechisms for the help of parents, and Sabbath-school teachers. We want small and cheap volumes on theology, Christian morals, and scripture exposition. Why cannot the Book-room supply them? We have talents in the ministry and laity, to produce works of sterling worth, which would be welcomed and read by our people. Such an undertaking is not anticipated and superseded by the Tract Society, and similar establishments. We wish to speak with high respect of the Tract Society, which we believe has done good service to the cause of Christianity; but we must not overlook the fact, that its theology is decidedly Calvinistic; and in some of its volumes, and tracts, Sovereignty, Election, Imputed righteousness, and Final perseverance, are affirmed and inculcated. To us, this is a serious objection, and in some cases, for want of proper caution, has exposed us to reproach. Were the Tract Society to adopt the creed of the Evangelical Alliance, it would not only become more catholic in its principle, but also widen the range of its usefulness. Nor can it be urged that this enlargement of the business of the Book-room would not be remunerative; for if private individuals amongst us, can make their works pay, the Book-room would be more likely to succeed, because, in addition to the intrinsic value of the works many would purchase in order to increase the profits which are devoted to public objects.

Might not an association of the literature and liberality of the Connexion be formed, for the purpose of supplying cheap tracts and books. Two or three volumes might be issued yearly, besides tracts. Our range of circulation is very limited; and a cheap literature requires a wide circulation. This objection of a contracted circulation may be overcome, if our rich friends will render subscriptions, or purchase a number of copies for free distribution, among the poor and others. This is a walk of usefulness confined to the rich; and the rich merchant, manufacturer, and the

busy tradesman, with but little expenditure of time and money, may thus accomplish much good in their generation. John Thornton, of London, not only gave away, large quantities of Bibles, and other books, at home, but he sent them in his bales of merchandise, to be given away in distant countries. Let us enter upon this new sphere of duty, and the fruits will be seen in the increased intelligence, stability, and prosperity of the body.

Union is strength, and churches unite together, and form a community; just as individuals, and villages, and towns, unite together to form a nation, for the purpose of mutual benefit. To diffuse equally throughout the body, the full benefits of such union, institutions must be formed, supported by the liberality of the many; and which institutions, must distribute their treasures as the respective parts of the union may require. Our Connexion has Funds, which have been established to meet the urgent wants of some parts of the body as well as to promote the benefit of the whole. By the Yearly Collection, the weak help the strong. The Paternal Fund is a mode of supporting the Ministry most pleasant to the people; and, while it does not augment the minister's stipend, it equalizes the burdens of circuits, and facilitates the stationing of the preachers in a way best calculated to serve the circuits. The Beneficent Society is a provision for the declining days of those ministers who have spent their best years, and worn out their lives in labouring in the word and doctrine amongst us. We have a Fund devoted to the relief of Chapel Debts, which are crippling the energies, and crushing the hearts of many of our best friends; and which if not relieved, would ere long work the ruin of the Connexion. The Mission Fund is expended upon the extension of the cause both at home and abroad. These Funds, it will be seen, contemplate the most important objects; and are bound up, not merely with the welfare, but with the existence of the body. Some think that these Funds do not benefit their circuit, and therefore they are not bound to support them. This view is altogether erroneous, and the conclusion drawn therefrom, involves an

act of injustice to the Connexion. That these funds be supported is as necessary to the welfare of the circuits, as a sufficient supply of suitable nourishment is necessary to the health and vigour of the various members of the animal body; if that nourishment be withheld, the body must suffer; and if the body suffer, each of the members must suffer with it. We are many members, but one body. And as all the parts share in the benefit of these funds, so all ought to contribute to their support, as they have the ability. Several of these funds are embarrassed by heavy debts; much to the dishonour and injury of the Connexion. This does not arise from the want of ability, but from the want of a more willing mind. Public collections should be increased in their amount, and the scale of subscription should be raised among the rich.

There is one method of supporting these funds, of sufficient importance to entitle it to a distinct reference, that is, by testamentary bequests. We have had a few legacies, and we acknowledge them in honour of the men, and of the principles by which they were influenced; but it is a mournful fact that almost all the rich men who have died amongst us, have left no such tokens of their unabated, and undying love to our Zion. In the disposal of their property, children and distant relatives are remembered; but the cause of God, from which they have derived so many spiritual blessings; and to which they owed much of their temporal prosperity; is overlooked, and abandoned. We do not ask the legacies of the dead to supersede the liberality of the living; but for the purpose of eliciting that liberality, and assisting it to accomplish objects, to which without such assistance, it would be unequal. David resolved in his heart to build a house for God; and he heaped together gold, and silver, &c., for this object. God did not permit him the honour. But the venerable prophet-king, did not devote that property to aggrandize his family; he bequeathed it to Solomon to be faithfully expended upon the object for which it had been gathered. A noble example! It is not to be wondered, that, when property is disposed of in so

godless a manner, as is generally the case, the children who inherit it, should often prostitute, or squander it. There was no blessing in it. It wanted consecration, by a portion of it being devoted to the cause of God. Let a man give to the cause of God, says the objector, while he lives. So we say, but let him not forget that cause when he sets his house in order, and prepares to give an account of his stewardship, at the judgement seat of his Saviour.

We have reached an important period of our history, and this volume is intended to be a literary monument of our Jubilee — a grateful tribute to the goodness and faithfulness of God. Various objects have been proposed and resolved upon by the Conference as desirable to be accomplished in connection with this event. The objects will be fully stated in an appendix at the end of this volume. They are various as the case required, and all are important. To have allowed the Jubilee of the Connexion to pass without a formal recognition, would have been a criminal neglect of those grateful obligations which we owe to Jehovah; and to have included in the celebration nothing more than the parade of public meetings, and empty rejoicing, would have been equally beside and below our duty. The occasion demanded, that a *thank offering* be presented to Jehovah. The objects determined upon are as worthy the liberality of the Connexion, as they are calculated to elicit it. Meetings have been held full of holy enthusiasm; and subscription lists have been opened. But whatever may be thought of individual subscriptions, when we consider the nature of the occasion, the objects proposed, and the ability of the Connexion, we shall only be uttering the judgement of many minds, not more sanguine than sober, when we say that the aggregate result has fallen below our *duty*, our *purposes*, and our *hopes*. But the object is not to be relinquished, nor are we to be satisfied with ought below its full accomplishment. We are publicly and religiously pledged to raise twenty thousand pounds; and the pledge must be redeemed. To fail will not only dishonour us in our own judgement; but in the judgement of the world

also; and posterity will regard us as wanting, either in prudence to devise our plans, or in energy to carry them out.

The state of trade has interrupted our proceedings. But when prosperity returns we must resume the work, and prosecute it to its completion. The Jubilee is strongly calculated to awaken grateful remembrances of past mercies bestowed upon us as individuals, families, churches, as a Connexion, and a nation; and when recounting these mercies, each should ask himself, "What shall I render to the Lord for all his benefits?" The Jubilee should be a time of restitution, when the rich man and all classes may search their hearts and their doings, to find out wherein they have been unfaithful to God and his cause; and if they have secularized instead of sanctified their property, let them resolve to restore unto the Lord that which is his own. Let those who have hitherto hesitated come forward, and let those who have promised, but not equal to their ability, revise and augment their subscriptions. If we resume the work in an earnest spirit; if all help and none hinder; by the blessing of our God we shall be successful; and He whose glory we seek to advance, will bestow showers of blessings upon us and upon our children.

Our hopes concerning the Jubilee do not terminate in the giving of money; we attach more importance to its moral results, and believe that the objects which our liberality contemplates, will lay a broad foundation not only for the stability but the abiding prosperity of the Connexion. We cannot for a moment suppose, that society in this country has undergone organic changes, so that Methodism, considered as a means of spreading Christianity, is no longer applicable thereto; and though through long years it gallantly braved the breeze and the wave, worked well on all seas, and richly freighted, made many prosperous voyages; yet now, like an old and worn out ship, it lies on the weedy strand, doomed to be broken up; while its place is supplied by vessels of more modern construction and of more im-

posing pretension. In its doctrines, ordinances, agencies, and spirit, Methodism is one with Christianity; and like Christianity, if it preserve its identity, it will possess a perpetual adaptation to society through all its changes. In all cases in which its machinery is faithfully worked, it still proves itself to be mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds. If Methodism do not stand out so remarkably apart, as it did in the early periods of its history, it is only because* it has diffused its spirit so widely, and other bodies have so extensively emulated it, that, it is like the sun, who when he first shoots his beams above the eastern horizon, and emerges the world from the night of darkness in which it had slept, every eye recognizes, and every heart rejoices in his ruddy and benignant face; but when he has climbed to his highest noon, he is almost forgotten in the blaze of his own glory. The churches of this country, as well as the nation at large, owe much to Methodism; and it is neither grateful nor just to plead the plenitude of a gift to the disparagement of the donor.

Methodism has not yet reached its meridian, much less is it culminating. Greater conflicts challenge its maturer strength; nobler triumphs will reward its faith and zeal. Thousands at home and myriads abroad shall learn from its lips the word of life; and hearts, yet unborn, shall hymn the Saviour's praises in the matchless melodies which its own bards have penned. For awhile — such is the natural tendency of society, religious as well as civil — for awhile, it may have forgotten its high vocation; reposing amid numbers, and wealth, and influence, and caressed by power and station, it may have lost some of its spiritual strength, and veiled some of its glories: but he who raised it up will redeem it; by his Holy Spirit, he will purify the eye of its faith, rekindle its ancient fires, and thrill it with

* This may be required to be qualified, by the admission, that the bodies of Methodists, have lost much of their primitive simplicity, and earnest zeal. The admission however applies not to *Methodism*, but to *Methodists*.

pristine sensibilities ; and it shall go down again into the broad depths of human debasement and wretchedness, — and as none carry so rich a blessing, so none are so much welcomed by the outcasts weltering there — and from among them will it again raise up a people to call the Saviour blessed. If Methodism do not thus cherish its primitive spirit, and address itself in earnest simplicity to its divinely appointed mission — if it allow itself to be dazzled by earthly splendour ; aspire to dwell in ceiled houses ; court the rich and the noble, and neglect the poor of the land — if it restrain its spirit and modify its machinery and practice in order to retain within itself the wealthy and the worldly, instead of going into the highways and hedges to seek and to save that which was lost — *then* the hand of prophetic destiny will record its doom, MENE, MENE, TEKEL, UPHARSIN. Then will God raise up another class of men, whom he will plentifully baptize with the spirit of Methodism, which we had cast away ; make them strong for the work which we had refused to prosecute ; and cover them with the honours which we had disowned and rejected.

Our Jubilee must not only be a *station* where we may rest ; review the past ; raise a monument and inscribe thereon, “ Ebenezer, Hitherto the Lord hath helped us : ” but it should be the place of renewed dedication to God ; and the starting point of a new and bolder career in his service. Every member amongst us must feel that he has an interest in the Connexion ; and that he is under obligation to labour for its prosperity. We hold no notions about the divine rights and powers of the ministry, which exclude laymen from active participation in religious ordinances, and the communication of religious instruction. Our church-order recognizes laymen as labourers in the Lord’s vineyard, and provides a variety of offices, adapted to their diversified gifts and talents. Working in the church must not be left to the ministry. “ Christians have not yet realized their responsibility. All the early Christians preached Christ to the ignorant, (Acts viii. 1-4 ;) and when a congregation leave

their minister to labour alone for the spiritual instruction of the neighbourhood, it is as though a regiment, in presence of the enemy, should leave their commander to accomplish their defence, while they reserved their own strength to provide forage for their horses, and quarters for themselves. Till a combined effort is made by all who have piety, talent, and education to convert the ungodly, we cannot expect the mass of society to be awakened to a sense of religion. As God uses suitable means for the accomplishment of his ends, we cannot expect him to add daily to the church such as shall be saved, till we see the whole body of Christ's disciples manifesting that diligence, fervour, and brotherly kindness, which, under God, led to this result in the primitive church. (Acts ii, 41, &c.)* The principle of Methodism is *universal co-operation*; and herein it is identified with primitive Christianity, when they that were scattered abroad went every where preaching the word. The church should be like a well constructed building, which contains no useless stone or timber, but every part of which contributes to the strength, the beauty, and usefulness of the edifice. Every member should feel that the church when it receives him into its communion, not only confers upon him many privileges calculated to promote his salvation, but imposes upon him the solemn duty to labour for its welfare. He were indeed a selfish drone, who entered a church for the sole object of his own benefit; and while he pertinaciously claimed its privileges, yet never exerted himself to promote its prosperity. Every one should make himself a productive member, and not be satisfied with being a mere consumer; — as he receives he should also endeavour to give. We could point to many places in the Connexion, where the church is small, and the whole establishment so feeble as scarcely to maintain an existence; but were all to unite in one spirit and endeavour, there would be an immediate revival; complainings and mutual criminations now so

* Baptist Noel.

prevalent, would be exchanged for joyful gratulations to each other, and grateful praises to Jehovah. The church languishes, only because it is unfaithful to its own interests. We should place the church first and highest in our regards, and cherish a zeal for her welfare so pure and intense, as to be able to adopt the impassioned language of the Psalmist, "If I forget thee O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy."

But if the members of our churches desire to be useful, they must labour to fit themselves for it. *Covet the best gifts*, says the apostle, and he reproves the converted Hebrews, because, *When for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you*. The Holy Scriptures should be read and well understood; other books also should be read not only for the purpose of biblical exposition, but also to enlarge the mind by an acquaintance with general truth; and a power of expressing themselves with clearness, fluency, and accuracy should be acquired. Take two members, who are equally pious and zealous; but the one has acquired a large portion of scriptural and general knowledge, while the mind of the other is indolent and barren, and his knowledge limited and crude; there can be no dispute as to which is fitted for the higher and more extensive usefulness. Zeal without intelligence to control and appropriate it may become a wild and ungoverned flame, as likely to be destructive as beneficial. Libraries should be established in connection with all our churches, and the people frequently exhorted to use them. The New Connexion demands a thinking and a well informed laity. In the hands of such men only can the constitution be safe, and be efficiently worked. Being based upon the eternal and unchangeable principles of truth and freedom, the better those principles are understood, the more will they be valued, applauded, and supported.

Every acquisition, whether temporal or spiritual, is to be sought and prized, in proportion to the power it may

confer upon us to do good. We are perpetually reminded by the constitution and operations of nature, that our life ought to abound in acts of beneficence. The sun is constantly pouring forth floods of light and heat; and sending forth lines of influence, which hold the lesser planets in harmonious subjection around him. Flowers open their beauties, and scatter their fragrance. The clouds drop fatness upon the earth, and they return again after the rain. Jehovah who has pictured his own image upon the works of his hands, and constituted nature to be the servant of his love, *is good, and he does good*, — he is active, universal, and disinterested kindness. His only begotten Son when he dwelt among us *went about doing good*. The Christian is said to be the light of the world, and the salt of the earth; both these figures express the relation in which he stands to the world, and the holy and blessed influence which he should be perpetually exerting upon it. We have been enlightened that we may shine and enlighten others; we have been converted that we may strengthen the brethren. To desire the possession of grace and knowledge without an intention to use them for the good of others, — to hoard up grace in the heart and knowledge in the memory, like gems in the cabinets of the wealthy, would be to incur the folly and guilt of the miser. To display these acquirements merely to elicit admiration, is to prostitute them to self-idolatry, instead of faithfully devoting them to the glory of God the giver. A moral agent does not derive his dignity and worth exclusively, nor perhaps mainly, from the strength and compass of his intellect, and the purity of his moral attributes, but from the service which he renders to the happiness of the universe of which he is a living part. Let the mind separating itself from all visible and actual existence, endeavour to realize the conception of Jehovah existing throughout eternity in the boundless opulence of his infinity, — silent, inactive; or what would be equal to it, his contemplation and action perpetually and exclusively turning upon himself — but the mind in awe-struck reverence,

shrinks from the bare idea of so august a being existing in the solitude of a blank immensity, and seeks relief in the living and joyful universé which Jehovah has made to declare his glory. His perfections exerted and manifested in the creation and preservation of innumerable forms of life and happiness, make him the object of our gratitude, and love, and adoration. Were angels nothing more than independent personalities, bright in intellect, and glowing with affection, where would be their worth to the universe? But when we read "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?" how their natures rise in dignity. This generous condescension to the heirs of salvation gives them a place in our esteem and love, which no personal qualities, apart from their benevolent use, could command. The poorest member we have in our churches, who has the feeblest mind and the smallest stock of knowledge, but who is intent upon doing good as God has given him the ability; is *greater in the kingdom of heaven*, than he who hides his talents, even though those talents made him sole proprietor of all the mines of the earth, or gave him the science of a Newton, and the eloquence of a Demosthenes. It is only in so far as the church rises to a conviction of these important truths, that it realizes its own true ideal; and only in so far as this conviction is practically carried out, that it fulfils its divine vocation.

Methodism has ever been a busy world. It not only employs the highly gifted, but it provides a sphere for the humble member of one talent, and summons him to the post of duty. What an amount of intellect has Methodism brought out, which would otherwise have remained dormant, nay so far as any valuable results are concerned, it would have remained literally dead; but beneath the fostering influence of Methodism this intellect has been cultivated, and consecrated to do noble service to God and his cause. The system of Methodism comprises a variety of offices in which all, no matter what their talents, or what their station, may be

usefully employed. If the New Connexion is to prosper, all these offices must be faithfully occupied. The machinery must be always working, and if so, none must be idle. Let not the one talent envy the ten talents; for every talent, however small in degree, is a gift from God, and must be as energetically used as the ten talents. He who had but one talent was not blamed, because he had not ten talents; nor because he had not improved his one talent into ten talents; but because in the spirit of envy, ingratitude, and impious dissatisfaction with the wise and benevolent, though sovereign, arrangements of divine providence, he hid his Lord's talent in the earth. He did not prostitute his talent, but he refused to appropriate it; he did not deteriorate it, but he refused profitably to employ it. We must never forget that our gifts are to be used; that in their legitimate use they improve; and when faithfully improved they shall be rewarded. Because some have not the splendid gifts of their brethren, they are not to remain inactive; because they may not occupy the pulpit, they are not to refuse to be the Leader, the Sabbath-school Teacher, or the tract distributor. It is an honour to be permitted to do any thing for God; and whatever we do for, him however humbly, if faithfully done, will be acknowledged and rewarded at the last day.

Man is acted upon by his fellow-man, and it is of immense importance to keep before the mind the images of those, who under the guiding light, and ennobling influence of true religion, counted not their lives dear unto them, so that they might finish their course with joy. At the head of this class, and incomparably beyond all actual approach, stands Jesus Christ, God manifested in the flesh. Next to him rank his holy apostles. Their lives are recorded by the faithful pen of inspiration, and with them the mind should be kept devoutly familiar. To these may be added the lives of Wesley, Fletcher, Bramwell, Carvossa, Janeway, M. and P. Henry, &c. Keep these holy examples, ever fresh in your recollection. Read them again and again; and make them your every-day models. To derive the fullest advantage

from biography there must be sympathy between us and the subject, and to produce this sympathy there must be similarity in our conditions, for only as our conditions in life are alike, can he be in the fullest sense, an example to us. The rich may read the life of Thomas Wilson, Esq., of London, and learn how wealth may be employed to the permanent extension of the cause of God in neglected districts. The tradesman may see in the Diary of Williams of Kidderminster, how fully religious principles and objects may be blended with secular pursuits. The working man may see in the Life of Harlan Page, how pregnant a lowly station is with opportunities of usefulness; and how humble talents may turn those opportunities to win souls to Christ. Nor should the life of our own Kilham be omitted. Excellently written, on the whole, as the last life of Mr. Kilham is, we cannot but regret that, the personal character of Mr. Kilham, as a Christian, a Preacher, and a Pastor, is encumbered and obscured by the minute and elaborate details of those controversies in which he was so earnestly and righteously engaged. He was not only an enlightened and a firm friend of freedom, but there glowed in his heart a flame of love and zeal, so pure and intense as to elevate and sanctify his life, in all its purposes and acts. Read the following passage, which deserves to be placed among the famous sayings of good men, which unveils his heart, and shows us the sacred passion which prematurely consumed him; "Many times while others sleep, my rest is banished by earnest desires and fervent prayers for the church of God; I often wish I could live without sleep, that I might accomplish the work more fully which the Lord has given me to do." Be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

But both the disposition and the moral strength to do good, come from God, as also the blessing which succeeds our endeavours. Hence the necessity of a living union with God through faith in Jesus Christ. Seek the full experience of the saints of God, — the abiding witness of

the spirit, and full sanctification. Just as your faith is vital, and brings you into habitual communion with God; just as you feel the practical power of religious and eternal realities on the heart, will you be borne along as on the bosom of a resistless current, to live not unto yourself but unto him that died for you and rose again.

Our endeavours should be directed to save souls. This is our great work, and we recur to it again, that it may not be forgotten. A scriptural constitution, government, and order in the church are important, but their place is secondary; and they are not to be named or thought of in competition with the salvation of souls. Let us regard christianity as a moral system devised and vouchsafed by God to instruct, regenerate and bless the world. Let us disentangle our conceptions of christianity from all that is circumstantial, sectarian, and human. Let us open our understandings to its simple truths, and our hearts to its holy principles and joys. Let us keep our eye and our hand steady to the one object, to make men, not sectaries but christians; not to win them to us and our body, but to Jesus Christ and his church.

Nor ought we to overlook the importance of females as labourers in the Lord's vineyard. We know how generously women ministered to Jesus Christ of their substance in the days of his flesh; and how faithfully they adhered to him in *the hour, and the power of darkness*. In the primitive churches there were devout and honourable women who were "helpers in Christ." And in later times, women have distinguished themselves by the ability and zeal wherewith they have served the church; and God has put the seal of his approval upon their labours. Lady Huntingdon, high in station, but higher still in the simplicity of her piety, and the ardour of her zeal, which prompted her to sell her jewels to obtain money to build a House for God; Mrs. Kilham — the widowed wife of Alexander Kilham — the devoted friend and instructor of the sable children of Africa; Mrs. Fry, who crossed seas, and wandered in strange lands, and penetrated prisons on errands of mercy, and who

in her last illness said to her daughter, "I can say one thing — since my heart was turned to the Lord at the age of seventeen, I believe I have never wakened from sleep, in sickness or in health — by day or by night, without my first waking thoughts being, How shall I best serve my Lord?" Sarah Martin, of Yarmouth, humble in birth, and dependent for subsistence upon her daily labour, yet impelled by a Saviour's love, devoted her evening leisure, and sacrificed one day in the week to visit the workhouse and the prison. The works of these women praise them in the gate, and till the heavens are rolled together as a scroll, their memories will live in the records of piety and philanthropy. The Church of Rome, ever intent upon extending its dangerous influence, has not failed to discern the value of females, but has organized them into societies, and employed them in services for which men were not fitted. In many of our large towns "sisters of mercy" may now be seen in sanctimonious garb, holding the well exposed reticule, silently parading the streets, and entering the homes of the afflicted and destitute poor. The policy is wise, though perverted — cannot we imitate it? We have amongst us many females of intelligence, and sufficient freedom from domestic cares and duties, as to have leisure to visit the sick, the poor, and the suffering; and adding to this the offices of leaders and catechists of the young, they will find appropriate spheres for the whole of their talents and time. We have had such women amongst us, and the names of Mrs. Salt-house and Miss Oldknow, will bring to mind some others, both living and dead. May the great head of the Church bless us with more of these "Mothers in Israel."

There are many features in the present condition of the Connexion calculated to inspire us with hope. The efforts made to reduce chapel debts — attention to the education of the young both in Sabbath and Day schools — the establishment of the Home and Foreign Mission — increased confidence and union amongst ministers and members — the wider diffusion amongst us of the genuine spirit of

Methodism — the increased activity and enterprize of our churches — the blessing which Jehovah is bestowing upon his gospel which is preached in our sanctuaries — and the increase of our members — these are hopeful indications which it would be ungrateful to God, and unjust to ourselves, not to acknowledge. We say little of the state of religious parties in this country, and the growing spirit of catholicity and union — we say little of the progress of liberal principles in the onward march of nations — we say little of the friendly recognitions and help we are now receiving from other bodies, and from individuals who were not wont thus to greet us — all this is gratifying so far as it goes — but we look within rather than without. In the growing unity, piety, liberality, and enterprize of the Connexion we see the surest promise and pledge of our prosperity. Were these wanting the most favourable circumstances would avail nothing. The tree planted in the richest soil, and surrounded by an atmosphere in the best condition, will nevertheless droop and wither, if it have not *in itself* health and power to turn these favourable circumstances to the promotion of its own nourishment and growth. But the vigorous oak, though the sun hide his face, and the tempest come forth from his caverns, and beat in ruthless violence against it, so far from receiving any damage, the storm only develops the life that is in it, and causes it to strike its roots the deeper, and seize the firm earth with a more tenacious grasp, and knot its arms for future struggles. If we cultivate life in ourselves — spiritual life, life in Christ — no outward opposition can injure; and favourable circumstances, by virtue of that life, will become the occasion of our continual enlargement and prosperity.

With auspices far brighter, than those which marked its formation in 1797, and with resources multiplied manifold, we may augur favourably concerning the progress of the Connexion. Chequered has been its history, and disheartening its trials; but our adversities have strengthened our faith in the soundness and power of our principles, and afforded us

abundant proofs of the good-will of Him who has been the shield of our help and the sword of our excellency. The bow of promise has never faded from the darkest sky, and He whose throne is encircled with the symbol of his faithfulness will never cast us off. In the past we see only motives to gratitude, and in the future pledges of hope. Peacefully will the New Connexion prosecute its course. While we refuse to compromise any of our principles, and claim an unfettered right to avow and disseminate them; we would neither forget, nor violate the courtesies of that charity which is the sister of truth and freedom. We hail the growing spirit of union among the various denominations of protestants; we have no laws to repeal in order to adjust the Connexion to the better spirit of the times; our pulpits have ever been open to those who *hold the Head*, and our hearts open to all who *love the Lord Jesus Christ*. In the rapid spread of intelligence and freedom we see no prognostic which threatens the stability of our constitution; the diffusion of knowledge, and the extension of equal rights, will only strengthen our foundations, and enlarge our bodies. Freed from those controversies, and struggles which were imposed upon us in the beginning, as necessary to defend and establish our principles, we would now fix our eye in steady gaze upon those higher objects directly connected with the evangelization of the world, and these we would pursue, with a firmer purpose, a bolder tread, and a more strenuous toil than we have before manifested. We are not indifferent spectators of the conflict, which is every day waxing more earnest, between popery and formalism, infidelity and vice, on the one side, and the Bible and pure religion on the other; we belong to the sacramental host of God's elect, and faithful to our glorified king we league our energies with all those who are valiant for the truth. Whatever may be the destiny of the New Connexion, whether it shall retain a distinct subsistence till the millennium dawn, and there shall be one fold under one shepherd; or whether the various branches of the great Methodist family shall *see eye to eye* and form themselves into one confederation,

forgetting their differences and separations in the cordial fellowship of one perfect brotherhood — these are questions which we venture neither to determine nor to discuss. Nevertheless, this much we may affirm, that as the Connexion has been a faithful witness for God in the past, it will not deny him in the future. “Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities : thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down ; not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken. But there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams ; wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ship pass thereby. For the Lord is our judge, the Lord is our law-giver, the Lord is our king ; he will save us.”

APPENDIX.
RESOLUTIONS AND PROCEEDINGS IN CONNECTION WITH
THE JUBILEE.

The following Resolutions were adopted by the Fiftieth Conference of the Methodist New Connexion, holding its Annual Session in Peter-street Chapel, Manchester, June, 1846. [Vide Minutes, 1846, p. 41-43.]

I. That the Conference cordially enters into the views expressed by last Conference, on the desirableness of a suitable commemoration of our Connexional Jubilee; and feels it to be the bounden duty of the Connexion gratefully to celebrate the FIFTIETH year of its existence, by the establishment of some valuable institutions for the benefit of the Community, and by assisting those of our present funds which require help. The Conference therefore determines, in dependence on the Divine blessing, and on the liberal co-operation of the people, heartily and devotedly to enter upon this work, and to raise not less than twenty thousand pounds, to be called, The Jubilee Fund.

II. That the Conference proposes to embrace in this Jubilee exertion:—

1. The establishment of an Institution for preparing young men intended for our ministry, at home, and for employment in our missionary field. And in connection with this Institution a Proprietary School, at which the children of our friends may receive a religious and liberal education, and also the children of our Preachers: the latter, on favourable terms.

2. The relief of our distressed chapel estates to some considerable amount.

3. Provision for a Home Mission, for the purpose of opening new fields of ministerial labour.

4. The outfit of a Mission to the Heathen.

5. The assistance of our Mission in Ireland and Canada.

6. Such other objects as the wishes of the Connexion and the progress of the Jubilee effort may suggest. That four years be allowed for the payment of the subscriptions and the completion of the undertaking.

III. That a special committee be appointed to carry the foregoing resolutions into prompt and energetic effect; and that the following ministers and brethren be requested to form the Committee, with power to add to their number, and that seven constitute a quorum; the Committee to appoint their own treasurer, secretaries, and auditors.

Rev. T. Allin, Chairman.	John Ridgway, Esq., Treasurer.	
Revds. T. Waterhouse,	J. Henshaw,	J. H. Robinson
S. Woodhouse,	J. Bakewell,	S. Hulme,
T. Scattergood,	W. Cooke,	P. J. Wright,
J. Livingston	P. T. Gilton,	J. Addyman,
W. Ford,	W. Baggaly,	T. W. Ridley.
J. Poxon,		

Also, for —

ASHTON, Messrs. J. Whittaker, Dean and Binns.
 BIRMINGHAM, Messrs. Barlow and Whitehouse.
 BOSTON, Messrs. Bailey and Tait.
 CHESTER, Messrs. Caldecot and Griffiths.
 DAWLEY GREEN, Mr. Heaford.
 DERBY, Messrs. Etches and Rube.
 DEWSBURY, Messrs. Burnley and Hirst.
 DUDLEY, Messrs. Lester and Sheddon.
 GATESHEAD, Messrs. Allen and Prockter.
 GUERNSEY, Messrs. Collette and J. Ozanna.
 HALIFAX, Messrs. Ackroyd, Hughes, Leyland and Styring.
 HANLEY, Messrs. Meigh, W. Ridgway, Wood and Mort.
 HUDDERSFIELD, Messrs. Joshua Crossland, George Crossland, Roberts, Sykes and R. Fawcett.
 HULL, Dr. Munroe, Messrs. Bielby, Craggs, and Runton.
 LEEDS, Messrs. Scarf, Tiffany, Blackburn, Avens, Dixon, and Heaps, sen.
 LIVERPOOL, Messrs. J. Robinson, B. Fowler and J. Tilston.
 LONDON, Messrs. Barford and Bates.
 LONGTON, Messrs. Bailey, Batkin, Cope, Hopwood and Robinson.
 MACCLESFIELD, Messrs. Oldham and J. Jackson.
 MANCHESTER, Messrs. Makinson, Brookes, Schofield, Chadwick, and Jenkinson.
 MOSSLEY, Messrs. Buckley, M. Andrew and Halliwell.
 NEWCASTLE, Mr. Grant.
 NORTH SHIELDS, Messrs. Tate, Carr, Wallace and Medcalf.
 NOTTINGHAM, Messrs. J. Bradley, Higginbottom, Sutton, sen., Chetham, N. Barnsdall and Corah.
 RIPON, Messrs. Williamson, Kearsley and Day.
 SHEFFIELD NORTH, Messrs. Ingleson, Wing and Peace.
 SHEFFIELD SOUTH, Messrs. Wilson, sen., Reed and Fenton.
 SHREWSBURY, Messrs. Icke, Brocas, Marston and Wilkes.

STALYBRIDGE, Messrs. Howard and Jonathan Ridgway.
 STOCKPORT, Messrs. Thornhill and Chapman.
 STOURBRIDGE, Mr. Blurton.
 SUNDERLAND, Messrs. Ward and Love.
 THORNE, Messrs. Thorpe and Coleman.
 TRURO, Mr. Uglow.
 WOLVERHAMPTON, Mr. Evans.

[The above Committee assembled in Manchester, July 23, 1846, and passed a series of important Resolutions, which are embodied in the following document; and which we think it desirable to preserve, by giving it a permanent place in the Jubilee Volume.]

The Address of the Methodist New Connexion Jubilee Committee to the Members and Friends of the Denomination.

Very dear Brethren, — You have already received the interesting intelligence that the late Conference resolved that the era of our Jubilee having arrived, the event shall be celebrated by a liberal and simultaneous consecration of our gifts to God, in order thereby to promote such important objects as will at once advance the interests of the Connexion, and leave to posterity an enduring monument of our gratitude to God, and of our devoted attachment to the principles which distinguish our beloved community.

The Committee, honoured by the appointment of Conference to carry out this laudable and important object, held their first meeting in Manchester, on the twenty-third of July. The attendance was highly respectable, and the friends entered heartily into this great movement, adopting such measures as appeared the best calculated to carry out the pious wishes of the Conference, and the anxious desires of the Connexion; and following up their decisions by specifying their intended contributions. The duty now devolves upon the Committee of laying before you a statement of their proceedings, and of inviting most respectfully and earnestly your hearty and generous co-operation.

The following Resolutions were unanimously passed:—

I. That this meeting cordially approves of the Jubilee commemoration as resolved upon by the late Conference, and considers it both a duty and a privilege to carry the same into effect; relying for success in their endeavours, on the blessing of God, the liberal co-operation of the Connexion, and the zealous support of Conference — the parent and guardian of the measure.

II. That the objects set forth in the twenty-third Resolution of Conference appear to be the most important and desirable that can be attained by this Connexional effort; the Committee therefore will proceed to carry them into effect, with one important addition, which, while coming within the limits of their instructions, will be most seasonable to their aged ministers and families, and most satisfactory to the Connexion.

III. That as the friends will be anxious to know not only the special objects of the Jubilee Fund, but the *amounts* which it is proposed to appropriate to them respectively, the following be recommended as the scale of appropriation: —

1. To the Relief of Distressed Chapels	£8,000
2. To the Preparatory Institution for Ministers	£6,000
3. To the support of a Home Mission	£2,000
4. To the outfit of a Mission to the Heathen	£1,000
5. To the assistance of the present Missions.....	£1,000
6. For assisting our superannuated Ministers and families, at the period of their retirement and otherwise not provided for	£2,000
	<hr/>
	£20,000
	<hr/>
7. Should any amount exceeding £20,000 be realized, such excess to be applied to the further assistance of our Chapels.	.

IV. That Messrs. W. Cooke and W. Jenkinson be appointed joint Secretaries to the Committee, and that to them be committed the publication of the proceedings of this meeting, accompanied by an animated address, explaining the course of the proceedings to be adopted, and calling upon the Circuits to come forward as the heart of one man to do their duty. These Circulars to be printed as speedily as possible, and forwarded to the superintendent Preachers for distribution.

V. That so soon as these Circulars have been distributed, the superintendent Ministers and their colleagues in the work form a Committee in each Circuit, and proceed to hold Circuit Meetings, when suitable appeals shall be made to the brethren; personal invitations also when necessary; and the most strenuous endeavours put forth to carry out the same within three months from this date.

VI. That the Subscription List from each Circuit be sent to the Treasurer, JOHN RIDGWAY, Esq., as shall hereafter be directed, and be published in the Magazine.

VII. That the first instalment of the Subscription be considered due on the first of January, 1847, and that the same be collected and paid into the hands of the Treasurer, by the twenty-fifth day of March following.

VIII. That in addition to the subscriptions of friends, an appeal be made to our congregations for their assistance, and that it be recommended to the Circuit Committees to adopt any other local means that can consistently be employed for the furtherance of the work.

IX. That the following brethren form a Select Committee to watch over and carry out the foregoing resolutions, and to report progress to the general Committee, and to call them together when needful—

Rev. Thomas Allin, Chairman. John Ridgway, Esq., Treasurer.
 Rev. W. Cooke and Mr. W. Jenkinson, Secretaries.
 Revs. Messrs. Hulme, Wright, Gilton, and Thomas Mills; Messrs. Thornhill, Makinson, Oldham, and Fowler.

X. That as deputations to the circuits were found highly beneficial, in promoting the Connexional effort which was so successfully made in the time of our difficulty, so it be resorted to in the time of our Jubilee offering: and that the following brethren be requested to place themselves at the disposal of the Select Committee, to visit those circuits where their services may be deemed desirable.

The President—Rev. T. Allin

Rev. T. Waterhouse,	Rev. Wm. Mills,	Mr. J. Dean,
„ S. Woodhouse,	„ G. Bradshaw,	„ T. Lester,
„ Wm. Ford,	„ J. Addyman,	„ W. Makinson,
„ Wm. Cooke,	Mr. C. Robe,	„ Wm. Avens,
„ S. Hulme,	„ D. Oldham,	„ J. Whittaker,
„ J. H. Robinson,	„ T. Scarf,	„ J. Tilston,
„ P. J. Wright,	„ W. Halliwell,	„ J. Bates,
„ W. Burrows,	„ J. Thornhill,	„ W. Brookes,
„ T. Scattergood,	„ R. Barford,	„ W. Tate,
„ P. T. Gilton,	„ Wm. Ridgway,	„ J. Wallace,
„ T. W. Ridley,	„ J. Allen,	„ J. Marston,
„ Thos. Mills,	„ R. Barlow,	„ J. Ridgway.
	„ B. Fowler,	

With any others that the Committee may prevail upon to act.

XI. That the Select Committee be empowered to look out for a suitable site for the establishment which forms so important a feature in our proceedings; also to obtain plans and estimates for the same, in order that the whole may be laid before the General Committee as early as may be practicable.

XII. That in due time the foundation and trusts of the Institution and management, together with all matters relating to its Connexional character, be prepared and submitted to Conference.

XIII. That a Jubilee volume of a suitable and interesting character, worthy of the occasion, be published; the Revds. T. Allin, S. Hulme, P. J. Wright, and W. Cooke, to prepare the same. The volume to be sold at Five shillings, and the profits to be added to the Jubilee Fund.

XIV. That the brethren in Ireland be recommended to commence a Jubilee commemoration, and that the amount raised be applied to Connexional objects in that country under the direction of the Irish Conference.

XV. That the brethren in Canada be exhorted to do the same, and in appropriating the amount, to keep in mind, what is so much required, the erection of houses for the Missionaries.

XVI. That the Select Committee be especially charged with setting apart a Sabbath-day to bring before our people and congregations their obligations to Almighty God for the favour he has vouchsafed to the Connexion in permitting it to see this Jubilee; and while stirred up to devout thanksgiving and praise for his goodness, to offer up believing prayer for the out-pouring of his Holy Spirit: and to consecrate themselves, officers and people, afresh to his service."

XVII. That a subscription be now commenced for carrying out the undertaking; with the devout prayer of all present that Almighty God may inspire the hearts of his servants to offer bountifully of their substance, that he may prosper them and the works of their hands; that he may inspire the Connexion with a spirit of noble liberality; and above all, that he may crown this Jubilee commemoration with signal success.

On passing this motion, papers were handed round for the free-will offerings of the brethren, and donations (including a few not present at the time,) were promised to the amount of £3190.

The Proprietary School was next taken into consideration, when the following resolutions were passed:—

1. That a sum of five thousand pounds or upwards be raised in shares, for the erection of a Proprietary School, in five hundred or more shares of ten pounds each; to be paid in four years, at such periods and upon such terms as the General Committee shall determine.

2. That the agency appointed in the foregoing resolutions, be employed in prosecuting this object, until the moneys are raised, when the whole shall be delivered over to the Proprietors.

3. That the Select Committee be requested to prepare a prospectus or outline of this Proprietary School, and to publish the same, so that our friends may be encouraged to come forward and help in its erection.

4. That this Committee will co-operate with the Proprietary in placing this Institution on trust, and in framing its regulations so that its Connexional character and their best interests may be united and secured.

You have now before you, dear Christian friends, the objects and the deeds of the Committee, so far as they have proceeded; and they affectionately entreat you to unite with them on an occasion so deeply interesting, and in measures so inestimably valuable. We most confidently calculate upon your cordial sympathy and zealous support. Attached as you are to the principles of the community, and grateful as you are for personal and Connexional blessings, you could not allow the era of our Jubilee to pass away without *some* appropriate memento; and we presume you will deem none more important or desirable than those now laid before you.

That it is important to free our chapels from oppressive burdens, and relieve our worthy Trustees from painful anxieties, and make our Trust Estate sources of revenue for the extension of the gospel, you have already determined by the praiseworthy efforts commenced in many parts of the community. The Jubilee Committee duly appreciating this view of our Connexional interests, and desirous to see it realized, have voted the largest proportion of the Fund for its accomplishment, and hope the liberality of the Connexion will enable them to apply a still larger amount to this purpose. That the age demands an *enlightened*, as well as a holy and laborious ministry will be admitted by all, and that it is our duty to adopt measures for securing these advantages cannot be denied. Such then is the object of our intended Theological Institution. The extension of the gospel in the large towns of this country, has long been felt to be a pressing obligation, and the time has come when this call of duty must be responded to, in the institution of a Home Mission. The opening of a Foreign Mission, to sound the trumpet of salvation to the Heathen, will well harmonize with the auspicious era of our Jubilee, and will be hailed by our friends in general; and the rendering of more effectual assistance to our Ministers, when worn out in the service of the Connexion, will, we are confident, find a response in the benevolent minds of our people.

With such noble objects before us — with an enlightened and generous people to appreciate them — with such a debt of gratitude to stimulate our benevolence — and with such an auspicious commencement, the Committee entertain no fear for the result. Already the sum of three thousand one hundred and ninety pounds is raised, and the remainder we confidently anticipate will in due time be realized. But let not our aim be confined to twenty thousand pounds. Let us direct our views

and purposes to a higher amount, that our Chapel Estates may reap all the advantages we desire. From all classes of our friends then, we ask their gifts, their influence, their prayers. Let our esteemed ministers out of their limited means contribute their offerings, and carry out the measures suggested by the Committee,—wisely laying down their plans, and faithfully and zealously bringing them into operation. Let our affluent friends give liberally of their abundance, remembering from whom they have received and to whom they are accountable. Let our poorer friends, like the generous Macedonian brethren so warmly commended by the apostle, and like the widow extolled by the Redeemer, give out of their poverty, knowing that he who multiplied the widow's oil, and supplied her barrel with meal, is their God, and will not allow their gifts to his cause, to pass unobserved and unrewarded. Surely there are very few, even among our brethren in humble life, who cannot spare five shillings annually for such a noble object; and for the accommodation of all who may desire it, the contributions may be received by small instalments, and the time for our gifts is extended to the period of four years.

This is the first Jubilee of our Connexion, and with most of us it will be the last: it behoves us then to act worthy of our position and our obligations. Let us then generously cast our donations into the Lord's treasury: "to him let there be given of the gold of Sheba;"—"Let our merchandise and our hire, be holiness to the Lord;"—"Let all that are round about bring presents unto him that ought to be feared." He who claims our liberality gave himself for our salvation, and has declared that he loves a cheerful giver.

Praying that God may vouchsafe to the community an abundant outpouring of his Holy Spirit, and favour all Christian denominations with peace and prosperity,

We are, dear Brethren, on behalf of the Committee,

Yours very affectionately, in the bonds of the gospel,

THOS. ALLIN, President.
 JOHN RIDGWAY, Treasurer.
 WM. COOKE, } Secretaries.
 W. JENKINSON, }

August 10th, 1846.

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“Whether it is that the editor of the ‘*Truth Seeker*,’ has sought for truth until he has become ‘blinded by the excessive light,’ or that he sought to ascertain the contents of the Polyglott mesmerically, by applying the outside of the folios to his forehead, and failed; or that he modestly ventured to speak for Walton without consulting him; so it is that, with the Targums extending through the last 390 pages, of the fourth volume, he was yet ‘wonderfully enabled’ to deny, in capitals, that they are contained in the work. For the satisfaction of some of our readers, we give the descriptive title of this valuable portion of the Polyglott; Triplex Targum, sive versio, Pentateuchi: I. CHALDAICA Jonathani Ben-Uriel ascripta. II. CHALDAICA Hierosolymitana. III. PERSICA Jacobi Tawusi. *Cumversionibus singularum Latinis.* Further, for our own satisfaction, and not at all as doubting Mr. Cooke's accuracy, (our previous knowledge of the Targums was entirely in favour of his,) we have turned to every passage in question between

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