

AN ANSWER

TO THE QUESTION,

WHY ARE YOU A WESLEYAN METHODIST?

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TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN EXAMINATION

OF

A TRACT ENTITLED

“TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE, No. 4—METHODISM AS  
HELD BY WESLEY. BY D. S. P.”

BY REV GEORGE PECK, D. D.

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## ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

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WE, the undersigned, being ministers in the Wesleyan connection, have read with high satisfaction the first edition of a pamphlet entitled, "An Answer to the Question, Why are you a Wesleyan Methodist?" We believe that it contains a correct statement of the general views and feelings of our body, in reference to the important subjects to which it relates; and we earnestly recommend it to the perusal of our societies and congregations, and of all others who wish to ascertain the true position and character of Wesleyan Methodism. We learn with pleasure, that, at a recent meeting of the Wesleyan book committee, THE REV. WILLIAM ATHERTON in the chair, it was unanimously resolved that a second edition should be forthwith printed; and also, that another edition should be prepared, in a very cheap form, and put into as extensive circulation as pos-

sible. We respectfully advise, that copies of these editions should be circulated by our friends, throughout the kingdom, among those persons, in their respective localities, who may need to be thus guarded against the attempts, recently made by certain parties, to disturb the peace of our societies, to unsettle the minds of our pious and simple-hearted people, and to stir up against our connection the spirit of unchristian hostility and annoyance. And we further suggest to our more affluent friends, that they would render good service to the cause of Christian truth, by a gratuitous and judicious distribution of this defence of our connectional character, and of our claims to be regarded as a true branch of the universal church of Christ. Such a distribution might tend to the prevention or removal of unfounded jealousies and prejudices, in the case of many candid and serious persons of other denominations, who are willing to hear both sides, before they concur in the censures now so lavishly directed against us by the advocates of an unscriptural and intolerant exclusiveness. To promote this object, so important in the pre-

sent circumstances of the times, we are authorized to state, that the cheaper edition, before mentioned, will be sold at a price so low, as to exclude all idea of pecuniary profit, for the sake of promoting more extensively the spiritual benefit which is the direct object of the publication.

JAMES DIXON, president of the conference in 1841.

RICHARD REECE, ditto, in 1816 and 1835.

JONATHAN EDMONDSON, ditto, in 1818.

JABEZ BUNTING, ditto, in 1820, 1828, and 1836, and president of the Wesleyan Theological Institution.

GEORGE MARSDEN, ditto, in 1821 and 1831.

ROBERT NEWTON, ditto, in 1824, 1832, and 1840.

GEORGE MORLEY, ditto, in 1830.

RICHARD TREFFRY, ditto, in 1833.

JOSEPH TAYLOR, ditto, in 1834.

EDMUND GRINDROD, ditto, in 1837.

THOMAS JACKSON, ditto, in 1838, and editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*.

GEORGE CUBITT, assistant editor of the *Magazine*.

JOHN HANNAH, theological tutor of the Wesleyan Institution.



AN ANSWER TO THE QUESTION,  
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INTRODUCTION.

MANY of the Jewish Christians, in the time of the apostles, were driven from their native land by the violence of persecution, and compelled to take up their residence in various heathen countries. In the several places of their exile, not a few heathens also received the truth as it is in Jesus ; and all these believers in the Saviour, notwithstanding their difference of language and of early habit, were united together in holy fellowship, and realized, in their intercourse with each other, the true communion of saints. One of the direct effects of their conversion was the possession of an earnest hope of eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ. Their anticipations of future good were not limited by time ; but comprehended the happiness of their spirits in a separate state ; the resurrection of their bodies in a glorified form ; and their consummate blessed-

ness with Christ for ever. Of this hope they were "not ashamed." It was "lively;" and, in the exercise of it, they not only "greatly rejoiced," but "purified themselves," even as the Lord is pure: thus labouring to acquire and preserve a full preparation for that world of holiness and joy into which they expected soon to enter.

The heathen people among whom these happy Christians sojourned were chiefly worshippers of dumb idols; and, as such, lived "without God:" for his worship and that of idols can never be either rationally or acceptably united. He is "the God of hope;" and all who live without him are described by the Holy Ghost, as "having no hope," either to cheer them under the loss of their friends, or to sustain them under the agonies of their own dissolution.

In such a state of things it is not surprising that the "hope" of the Christians excited great attention, and many inquiries: some persons doubtless ridiculing it as an idle dream; and others, more thoughtful and sedate, thinking it worthy of a calm and anxious investigation. The well-known admonition of St. Peter was given to these exiled witnesses for Christ, and to their Gentile brethren in the faith: "Be



ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear," 1 Pet. iii, 15. Whether those who questioned the Christians respecting their "hope" were cavillers, or candid inquirers after truth, the sanctified heirs of a blessed immortality were to state the grounds of that "hope," with "meekness," so as to give no unnecessary offence; and with "fear," speaking on a subject so sacred without either sarcasm or levity; so that glory might redound to God, and the heathen understand the nature and evidence of the gospel. In this manner, there is reason to believe, many idolaters were led to an acquaintance with Christianity.

The Wesleyan Methodists of the present day are placed in circumstances somewhat similar to those which have been just described; only, in many instances, the reality of their hope is rather peremptorily denied, than examined. It is boldly asserted, that these people, who have hitherto passed for Christians, both in their own estimation and that of others, form no part of the church of Christ; and that, if they be saved at all, it will be as mere heathens, by some secret and unknown mercies, for the exercise of which no provision is made in any covenant that God has revealed to mankind. They are

therefore earnestly called upon, as they would meet their righteous Judge with acceptance, to abandon all their own places and forms of worship, and to attend exclusively the ministrations of the national clergy; some of whom declare that they are the only men in these realms who are able to dispense the Christian sacraments, and authorized to preach the doctrines of salvation. The Methodists are sometimes vehemently urged to be rebaptized, as the only means of acquiring the true Christian character. Nor are their breathless remains always treated with greater respect, being occasionally denied the common rites of Christian burial.\*

What impression these things may make upon the minds of my Wesleyan brethren, I know not. I can, however, answer for myself; and to all candid and serious men, who may be concerned in the subject, I will frankly state the reasons which have determined me, by the grace of God, to remain among this people, till it shall please him to call me hence; nor will I cease, in the mean while, to "hold fast that

\* Dissenters in England can have burial in *consecrated ground*, and have the *benefit* of the *Church service*, only on the principle that *lay baptism* is acknowledged to be valid. This has in some instances been questioned, and decent burial denied dissenters.—*Am. Ed.*

blessed hope of eternal life which is given me in our Saviour Jesus Christ." For the Church of England, as a whole, and as a *Protestant* establishment, I have long entertained what I conceive to be a just and sincere respect; nor shall any thing absolutely alienate me from her ordinances. Some of the best hours of my life have been spent in the use of her truly sublime and evangelical liturgy. The sanctified scholarship of her sons has produced the richest theological literature in the world. To the doctrine of the holy trinity, and to the sufficiency of sacred Scripture, her testimony has been strong and unwavering. As an antagonist of Popery, she has been a mighty blessing to the nation. But, with many honourable exceptions, her clergy have failed practically to maintain that vital element of Christian truth,—that sign of a standing or of a falling church,—JUSTIFICATION BY FAITH; nor have their ministrations been faithfully directed to the advancement of spiritual religion. The work of the Holy Ghost in the human heart, not a few of them in every age since the Reformation have, in a great measure, overlooked; so that, with respect to personal salvation, their public teaching has been very defective. On this account especially, and on account of the antiprottestant

doctrines which are at this day extensively taught in her pulpits, I decidedly prefer my position, as a Wesleyan Methodist, to that strict and exclusive connection with her which some men declare to be even essential to salvation.

Before I proceed more directly to the object which I have in view, I will propose two observations. The first is, that Christianity is eminently a social religion; and hence Christians are everywhere described in the New Testament as a united people. I consider it, therefore, my duty, as a follower of the Lord Jesus, to be joined in church fellowship with those who bear his name. Now, whatever might be the state of things in the apostolic times, I find Christians in the present day divided into distinct and separate churches; or rather, the universal church of Christ is divided into various sections. There are, for instance, the Church of England; the Church of Scotland; Baptist and Independent Churches; the Lutheran Churches of Germany, Denmark, and Sweden; the Reformed Churches of Holland, France, and Switzerland; the Greek Church; the Church of Rome, &c.; some of which claim for their communities the honourable title of Catholic, or Universal. The Church of Rome calls herself the Catholic or Universal Church;

and several sons of the Church of England affect the title of Anglo-Catholics, and speak with great bitterness of those whom they assume not to belong to the church Catholic, and whom they therefore call "sectaries." The fact, however, is, that the assumption of the name of Catholic, by any one class of Christians, is palpably absurd, if any thing more be meant by it, than that the parties belong to the great "family of God," which comprehends all who hold the truth, and who practice what they hold. No one community of Christians can be Catholics exclusively. They are Catholics just as are other denominations of Christians who walk in truth and love. The Church of England, for instance, as the Church of England, is distinct and peculiar; having its own forms of worship and mode of government; and therefore cannot be *the* Catholic Church, any more than London is Great Britain, or than Great Britain is the world. The same is true of the Church of Rome, notwithstanding the arrogance of her assumptions. Bold and pompous titles alter not the nature of things. The Catholic Church, as at present existing, is composed of various sections; and though one or more of these may declare themselves to be the whole church, they only proclaim their bigotry and

exclusiveness. A branch of the Catholic Church they may be ; but they are no more *the* Catholic Church than the small county of Rutland is the British empire.

Seeing then that I ought to belong to the church of Christ, comprehending the body of the faithful ; -and that I have no means of doing this but by connecting myself with some particular section of the church Catholic ; I am compelled to make my choice among the various religious communities to whom I can have access. In doing this I am so far a Catholic Christian as I hold Catholic truth, and am actuated by the spirit of Catholic love.

A second observation which I would offer is, that ecclesiastical order is only a means to an end. Christians are united together, and are placed under ecclesiastical discipline, for the maintenance of the truth, the advancement of personal godliness, and the spread of true religion in the world. "The church is the pillar and ground of the truth," which it is to conserve and uphold in all Scriptural purity. It is to keep the ordinances of Christ, as he instituted them, for its own and the world's benefit. Its members are to sympathize with each other in the various joys and sorrows of life, and to provoke each other to love and good works ; to

provide for the Christian training of youth ; to act by united counsels, and to put forth united efforts, for the conversion of the ungodly part of mankind, both at home and abroad. When they thus walk in faith and charity, live in peace and holiness, and exert a salutary influence upon "them that are without," the end of their union is answered ; and that form of church government is the most accordant with the divine mind, and therefore to be preferred before all others, which best subserves these all-important purposes. Of what avail is it to any man that he lives under the Episcopal, the Presbyterian, or the Independent form of church government, and that he uses a liturgy, or joins in extemporary prayer, if he be proud and revengeful, a swearer, a drunkard, or an adulterer ? He may talk about his "excellent church," and condemn all who are not within its pale ; yet is he under the wrath of God, and in the broad way that leadeth to destruction. Addressing an unconverted young man, who had joined the Church of Rome, Mr. Wesley said, with equal truth and force, "You believe the Church of Rome is right. What then ? Whether Bellarmine or Luther is right, you are certainly in the wrong, if you are not 'born of the Spirit ;' if you are not renewed in the spirit

of your mind, in the likeness of Him that created you. I doubt you were never convinced of the necessity of this great change ; and poor zealots, while you are in this state of mind, would puzzle you about this or the other church ! O fools and blind ! Such guides as these lead men by shoals to the bottomless pit." According to the New Testament, the church of Christ is not a promiscuous crowd, comprehending the openly profane, as well as the pious ; but a company of faithful people, called out of the world, by the word and Spirit of God, and joined together for spiritual purposes. To preserve their own purity, and the honour of the religion which they profess, they are to exclude from their fraternity all such as become immoral and disorderly. " Put away from among yourselves that wicked person." The appointment of ministers, preaching, public worship, sacraments, discipline, were all instituted with reference to the conversion, edification, and actual salvation of mankind ; and therefore to rest in them, as if they constituted the whole of Christianity, is a fatal mistake. An ungodly stickler for ecclesiastical rule and order is as great an anomaly as a rebel clamouring in favour of the law which he is violating, and of the authority which he is labour-



ing to subvert. He despises that which is the end of all rule and order, and but for which they would never have been instituted. His professions, therefore, can only be regarded as sinister and hypocritical. He is condemned out of his own mouth. "In Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love," Gal. v, 6.

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## CHAPTER I.

*The Wesleyan Methodists have been the means of my personal salvation.*

As I believe Wesleyan Methodism to be Scriptural Christianity, I will briefly state what I conceive to be its real nature. Those who please may dispute about the forms and circumstances of religion: I contend for what I apprehend to be its living power, "without which I must perish everlastingly." Life is hastening to its close. My great concern is, not to stand fair in the estimation of men, but to know and do the will of God; so that I may be approved by him when summoned to my final account. I want to "find mercy of the Lord

in that day. To this one object I would subordinate every consideration. What are the censures of men? "It is God that justifieth." What is human applause? By the decision of God I must stand or fall.

The sacred Scriptures, which were written by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and are therefore the rule and standard of divine truth, assert, in every form of expression, the universal sinfulness of mankind, and everywhere assume that melancholy fact. This doctrine indeed is essentially connected with the entire system of revealed truth. If man be not fallen, he needs neither a Redeemer nor a Sanctifier: hence Christianity, which declares that God, in his endless mercy, has provided both, is inapplicable, and can never be what it professes, —the religion of mankind. "To the law and to the testimony," then, let the appeal be made. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And it repented the Lord that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." Gen. vi, 5, 6. The marginal rendering of the former of these verses is, "the whole imagination;" and the translators, unable to give the full force of the original, except in

a paraphrastic form, have added, "The Hebrew word signifieth, not only the imagination, but also the purposes and desires." "The heart of the sons of men is full of evil," Eccles. ix, 3. "All we like sheep have gone astray ; we have turned every one to his own way," Isa. liii, 6. "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked : who can know it ?" Jer. xvii, 9. "Out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and defile the man." Mark vii, 21-23. "We have before proved both Jews and Gentiles, that they are all under sin ; as it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one : there is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable : there is none that doeth good, no, not one." Rom. iii, 9-12. "There is no difference : for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God," verses 22, 23.

This corruption of nature is hereditary, and is necessarily connected with guilt, and consequent exposure to the righteous vengeance of God. "I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin

did my mother conceive me," Psa. li, 5. "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation," Rom. v, 18. "The wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men," Rom. i, 18. "What things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God;" or, "subject to the judgment of God," as the words are rendered in the margin. Rom. iii, 19.

This fearful state of the human race is, as has been already intimated, assumed in the gospel, which proclaims Christ as the world's Redeemer and atonement; and reveals to men in every age and nation the provision which has been graciously made for their salvation from sin; thus establishing the fact, that they are both depraved and under condemnation. "The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all," Isa. liii, 6. "We thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead," 2 Cor. v, 14. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; who gave himself a ransom for all," 1 Tim. ii, 5, 6. "We see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honour; that he by the grace of

God should taste death for every man," Hebrews ii, 9.

The same sad truth is unequivocally implied in the evangelical commission. The gospel, as a revelation of mercy to sinners, is to be preached to every creature under heaven ; who, of course, needs the mercy which is thus announced to him in the name of the Lord. Mark xvi, 15 ; Col. i, 23. " God commandeth all men everywhere to repent ;" (Acts xvii, 30 ; ) which it is impossible he should do, if they were not all guilty before him. Repentance and remission of sins are directed to be preached in the name of Christ among all nations, " beginning at Jerusalem ;" (Luke xxiv, 47 ; ) so that Jews and heathens are placed on a level. There is no essential difference in their moral and spiritual state. All are guilty, and all have sins to be remitted.

Of the manner in which our Lord's commission was fulfilled, and of the effects which followed, we have an ample account in the Acts of the Apostles, and in the apostolical Epistles, which present a striking view of the design of Christianity. Under the preaching of the inspired servants of our Saviour, and of their fellow-labourers who were raised up to assist in the dissemination of the gospel, men were

filled with alarm on account of their sins ; became penitent and contrite in their spirits ; and inquired, even with tears, by what means they might escape impending wrath. Under the gospel ministry at Jerusalem, the Jews by thousands “ were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do ? ” Acts ii, 37. The heathen jailer at Philippi, actuated by the same feelings, expressed himself in precisely similar language. He “ came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, and said, Sirs, what must I do to be saved ? ” Acts xvi, 29, 30. Such persons were invariably directed to Christ, as their Saviour ; and while they were baptized in his name, they were instructed and encouraged to believe in him, so as to trust in him for pardon, holiness, and eternal life. “ Neither is there salvation in any other,” said the apostles : “ for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved,” Acts iv, 12. Everywhere they insisted upon the absolute necessity of faith in Christ, as the grand and divinely-appointed means of obtaining a personal interest in the benefits of his sacrifice and intercession.

According to the apostolic teaching, men are

justified and accounted righteous by faith, as distinguished from works, both moral and ceremonial. "By Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses," Acts xiii, 39. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; to declare at this time his righteousness, that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus," Rom. iii, 24-26. "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness," Rom. iv, 5. If any man might be justified before God on the ground of his personal obedience, it was the moral Jew; but even he was not exempted from the great "law of faith." "We who are Jews by nature, and not sinners of the Gentiles, knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified," Gal. ii, 15, 16.

This momentous change in a man's relation to God is sometimes described as his adoption; so that from an alien, and even a child of the wicked one, he becomes a child of God. "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name," John i, 12. "Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," Gal. iii, 26.

The most distinguishing blessing of the evangelical dispensation is the gift of the Holy Ghost, in the fulness of his power, as the Comforter, the Sanctifier, the Helper of our infirmities, and as "the Lord and giver of life." This gift the Son of God has received, as the fruit of his passion; and he is pleased, from the throne of his glory, to shed it forth. The Spirit will never be withdrawn, but remain through all time to supply the place of Christ upon earth. Of this unspeakable gift men are individually made partakers through faith in Christ. "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink. He that believeth on me, as the Scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this spake he of the Spirit, which they that believe on him should receive." John vii, 37-39.



“ Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us : for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree : that the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith,” Gal. iii, 13, 14.

Such is the doctrine of the Holy Scriptures respecting the fallen state of human nature, redemption by Jesus Christ, and the manner in which the benefits of that redemption are applied. Men of every tribe and age are by nature corrupt and guilty ; they are redeemed by the death of the Son of God ; and they can only be justified and accepted through faith in him. By the same faith they receive the Holy Spirit, by whom they are filled with heavenly comfort, delivered from the dominion of sin, sanctified to God, and fitted both for his service on earth and his kingdom in heaven.

With this doctrine the experience and character of the people forming the apostolical churches were in perfect and beautiful agreement. Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ with all their heart, they “ passed from death unto life ;” (1 John iii, 14 ; ) that is, from a state in which they were under the sentence of eternal death, to a state in which God himself adjudged

them to life everlasting. They were "accepted in the Beloved;" (Eph. i, 6;) their "transgressions were forgiven, and their sins were covered;" (Rom. iv, 7;) and they were assured, on the authority of men who knew the mind of God, that there was "now no condemnation" resting upon them. Rom. viii, 1. The change in their state was described in terms still more encouraging. Formerly they were of their "father the devil," and were the wretched heirs of his misery. Now they stood in a filial relation to God, being the adopted "sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty," 2 Cor. vi, 18. As such, they were placed under his merciful protection; they had the freest access to him in all acts of religious worship; and they had the assurance of all good, both in time and eternity.

The fact of their personal justification and adoption was to them no secret, or matter of uncertainty. "Being justified by faith, they had peace with God;" (Rom. v, 1;) a peace so rich and permanent, as to surpass all understanding. Nor is this surprising; for it was a peace which God himself imparted. Phil. iv, 7. St. Paul therefore prayed for the Romans: "Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope, through the power of the Holy Ghost,"

Rom. xv, 13. The same people, we are informed, could "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom they had received the atonement," Rom. v, 11. Being constituted the children of God, they had not merely a general assurance of his favour toward them, from which they might themselves deduce comfort; but their heavenly Father, in addition to the promises of his word, "sent into their hearts the Spirit of his Son, crying, Abba, Father," Gal. iv, 6. "The Spirit itself," by a mysterious, but direct and satisfactory testimony, "bore witness with their spirits that they were the children of God;" (Rom. viii, 16;) and they were further taught, that if they were "children, then were they heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," ver. 17. It is therefore mentioned, as a peculiarity of their character, that they "rejoiced in hope of the glory of God;" (Rom. v, 2;) for they knew, that if "their earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, they had a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v, 1.

The change which was effected in the dispositions and habits of the early converts, when they believed in Christ, corresponded with that which took place in their state. They were God's "workmanship," and were by him "cre-

ated anew." Eph. ii, 10; 2 Cor. v, 17. Their thoughts, their tastes, their desires, their purposes, their conversation, their general practice, were entirely changed. They had been "the servants of sin," but were now delivered from its power and pollution. They were made "free from sin;" (Rom. vi, 18;) it no longer had "dominion over them;" (ver. 14;) each of them felt that "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus had made him free from the law of sin and death;" (Rom. viii, 2;) and they all therefore "reckoned themselves to be dead indeed unto sin," and "alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi, 11. Being born of God, they sinned not. They were placed under a moral inability with respect to the commission of it. They hated it; it was abhorrent to their renovated nature; so that, in fact, they "could not sin, because they were born of God," 1 John iii, 9. These passages of holy writ, with many others that might easily be adduced, describe, not only a correct moral conduct, but purity of heart, the direct effect of the Holy Spirit's influence.

The goodness of these first Christians was not merely negative, but possessed a positive character. When they were made free from sin, they were invested with all the graces of

the Holy Spirit. Love to God was the leading characteristic of their sanctified nature, and love to one another was the next in order. Their love to God was a grateful affection, kindled in their hearts by a deep sense of his love to them. "We love him," said they, "because he hath first loved us," 1 John iv, 19. They were so impressed with the mercy of God in their redemption and actual salvation, as to devote all their powers to his glory, and the advancement of his work in the earth. "The love of Christ constrained them;" so that the ungodly part of mankind often thought them "beside themselves," 2 Cor. v, 13, 14. Guided by his word, and assisted by his grace, they "denied themselves of all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and lived soberly," with regard to themselves, governing their appetites and passions; "righteously," with respect to other people, rendering to all their due, and discharging, with conscientious fidelity, every relative duty; "and godly," worshipping their heavenly Father in spirit and in truth, and presenting themselves to him as a holy living sacrifice.

They walked by faith; not taking the example of the multitude for their guide; but regulating their entire conduct by the revealed will

of God ; living under his eye, and having constant respect to their appearance before him in judgment, when the secrets of all hearts will be opened, and the eternal state of every man be determined according to his works. Yet their fear of God was not servile, being mixed with filial confidence and love.

Such is Christianity, as described by its inspired teachers, and exemplified in their spiritual children, whom they instructed and trained. Men are saved from sin, its guilt, its misery, its power, and are made happy and holy by believing in Christ. In this comprehensive sense they are saved by a faith which is of the operation of God. Practical holiness follows, but never precedes, justifying faith. Every man is "ungodly" till he is justified. In this state of salvation believers are to remain, breathing the spirit of prayer, thanksgiving, and holy love ; abstaining from all appearance of evil ; doing good to all men, especially to the household of faith ; offering to God a spiritual worship, and in all things serving him with circumspection and integrity of purpose. The great design of the gospel, with all its ordinances and discipline, is to bring men into this state of acceptance, peace, and holiness ; and so to preserve them in this state, that, when they "fail upon

the earth, they may be received into everlasting habitations.”

Some persons seem to imagine, that the strong expressions of Holy Scripture, relative to the change which Jews and heathens underwent when they became Christians, are not applicable to people living in countries professedly Christian. It is thought that if such people are not born Christians, they are certainly made Christians by baptism, in their infancy, and should ever after be regarded as such. Far be it from me to speak disparagingly of baptism, which God himself has instituted. It is the sacrament by which mankind are admitted into the Christian church, and acquire a peculiar right to the blessings of the evangelical covenant. It is a simple but striking representation of that spiritual washing which all absolutely need, in consequence of the corruption of their nature, and which our Lord calls a new birth, or a birth from above; (John iii, 3;) it teaches that Christianity is a holy religion, so that all are required, on their very entrance upon the Christian life and profession, to renounce sin, as a moral pollution; it is a significant declaration of God's good will toward the child, which has been redeemed by the death of Jesus Christ, and of his readiness to bestow

upon it all the blessings of his salvation ; it is one of the seals which God has affixed to his covenant of mercy ; it is, on the part of the parents who thus present their child to God, an open and declared acceptance of his covenant, and a pledge that while they claim for their child the blessings which he hath promised, they will, as the child advances in life, use the appointed means of instruction and discipline in order to the attainment of them. But that baptism necessarily, and of itself, restores mankind to personal holiness, is contradicted by analogy, and by facts the most obvious and undeniable. It no more produces this effect than circumcision did under the old covenant. Our blessed Lord, addressing the circumcised sinners of his day, exclaimed, with mingled pity and indignation, "Serpents, generation of vipers ! how can ye escape the damnation of hell?" Matt. xxiii, 33. At a later period, St. Paul, reasoning with the same deluded people, who thought they must needs be the people of God, because they bore in their persons the seal of his covenant, advanced this startling truth : "Circumcision verily profiteth, if thou keep the law ; but if thou be a breaker of the law, thy circumcision is made uncircumcision," Rom. ii, 25. And the same is unquestionably



true of Christian baptism, which does not, as a matter of course, sanctify the heart. For ages an immense majority of the persons who have been baptized have also been notoriously wicked, scarcely less so than the heathen themselves. Millions of baptized transgressors, at this day, set at open defiance all the laws of God, and stand in as much need of repentance, pardon, and sanctifying grace, as did the blaspheming Jews, to whom St. Peter preached at Jerusalem, or the idolatrous heathens, to whom St. Paul proclaimed the gospel in Ephesus, Philippi, Athens, or even in Rome. The fact is, human nature is the same in all ages and places, although it may be restrained by the providence and grace of God. Every man is born in sin, and is by nature a child of wrath, inheriting the "carnal mind," which "is enmity against God," and which is "not subject to his law, neither indeed can be," Rom. viii, 7. They that are under the power of this fleshly mind "cannot please God;" (Rom. viii, 8;) as a "corrupt tree cannot bring forth good fruit." "God is a Spirit," and demands spiritual worship. His "kingdom is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," Rom. xiv, 17. The word has passed his lips, and will never be recalled, that

“without holiness no man shall see the Lord,” Heb. xii, 14. Unless nominal Christians, therefore, be changed into spiritual worshippers, and unholy men of every name and country be converted into saints, they will be inevitably consigned over to the fire that never shall be quenched, and to the worm that dieth not.

My great concern, therefore, is, in common with that of every other man, to ascertain the means by which I may regain the favour and image of God, and thus secure that everlasting salvation, for the attainment of which I was both made and redeemed. If this be gained, all is gained; if this be lost, all is lost, existence itself is a curse, and I perish for ever. Learning, property, worldly distinction, health, domestic comfort, are all nothing when compared with this. The loss of riches, of honour, of life itself, is even gain when set in competition with the loss of the soul. Let me spend my days in sickness, pain, obscurity, dishonour, the most abject poverty, I am content, so that I may be saved at last. O God,

“I deprecate that death alone,  
That endless banishment from thee!  
O save, and give me to thy Son,  
Who trembled, wept, and bled for me!”

I will now, with all simplicity, state my own

case in regard of this all-important subject. I introduce it, not as containing any thing peculiar, but as an example of ten thousand others, differing indeed in circumstances, but substantially the same: for immense masses of the people of England, as well as myself, might justly say, "Had it not been for Methodism, we must have perished in ignorance and sin." I was born, nearly sixty years ago, in a small agricultural village, where I was baptized by the clergyman who conducted divine worship once a fortnight in our parish church. When young I attended his ministrations, but with little perceptible profit. His preaching I never understood, and was therefore never impressed by it. Whether his views of religion extended beyond its outward forms, I know not. Lamentable ignorance of divine things, with a general profligacy of manners, prevailed among the people. Family worship, I believe, was not so much as thought of by any individual in the entire parish. Cursing, swearing, scoffing at divine things, drunkenness, and sabbath-breaking were awfully prevalent. In private life, the most common act of devotion, if such it may be called, I believe consisted in the repetition of a rude couplet, which had been received from a former age,

“ Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John,  
Bless the bed that I lie on.”

In the immediate neighbourhood was resident a 'squire of the Roman Catholic denomination, who was not at all unwilling to make proselytes. He supported a priest of the same persuasion, who administered medicine among the poor, and lent his assistance, whenever an opportunity offered, in transferring the sheep from the professedly Protestant to the Romish fold, where their morals were not at all improved.

Two aged men in the village, anticipating their final account, and wishing to have such spiritual assistance as they did not enjoy ; at the same time pitying the neglected people around them, who were rapidly degenerating into Popery and practical heathenism ; agreed together to invite a Methodist preacher to visit them at stated periods, and minister to all who would hear him the word of life ; informing him, however, that, in consequence of their poverty and their rude manner of living, they could not give him a dinner, but would accommodate him with a bed and a cup of tea. The preacher to whom they stated their case readily replied, “ I fast on every Friday till the evening, and will visit you once a month on that day ; so that there will be no difficulty with

respect to the dinner." He fulfilled his engagement, and was succeeded by others of the same spirit. From that day the progress of Popery was arrested; inquiries on the subject of religion were called forth; family prayer was introduced into habitations where the name of God had been seldom heard, except in connection with a profane oath; the standard of Christian morality was erected; open ungodliness was gradually put to shame; and since that period many a believer in Jesus, thus instructed and saved, has died in peace and hope. The two aged men, who were a means of introducing this blessed change, had received their religious impressions in distant places; one of them, under the preaching of the Methodists, and the other, under the ministry of an evangelical clergyman.

The Methodist preachers at length visited the village once a fortnight. They preached on a week-night, in a thatched cottage, into which they and their hearers descended by two or three steps. They also brought with them, from time to time, small religious books, such as Mr. Wesley's Sermons, which were usually sold for a penny each, and the poetical tracts of his gifted brother, and thus encouraged among the people a taste for reading: a feel-

ing which had scarcely ever been known previously to exist in the place, either in man, woman, or child. I was taken by my parents to hear these itinerant evangelists in the cottage, and also in the chapel of a neighbouring town. As a matter of course, we were regularly hooted as we passed along the streets, to and from these services, by companies of idle people and sabbath-breakers, who were hostile to all religious innovations; and their jibes, I well remember, were to me a source of bitter mortification. The preachers themselves never expected to be seen abroad without being insulted.

Under the ministry of these men I gradually saw the spirituality of the law of God; the evils of my own nature; my guilt and righteous liability to the Almighty's wrath; the atonement of Christ, as the way of a sinner's access to God, and the medium of all divine communications; with the nature and necessity of justification and inward holiness. Often, when yet a youth, has the word come with convincing power to my conscience; tears have involuntarily started into my eyes; desires after Christ and heaven have been excited in my heart; and, when the service was ended, I have retired into secret, bowed my knees in

prayer, and made supplication to God, whom I felt I had offended, but who was mercifully drawing me to himself. After many fluctuations, secret resolves, and violated vows, my convictions became more deep and painful than ever ; so that I was compelled to disclose my feelings to others who had passed through the same conflicts, and who were always ready to sympathize with those whose hearts were broken and contrite. They explained to me the way of faith in Christ ; they declared the sufficiency of his atonement, the tenderness of his mercy, the greatness of his power, the absolute truth of his promises ; and thus urged and encouraged me to trust in him for present pardon, peace, and holiness. I wept, and made supplication, for my burden of sin was too heavy to be borne ; they united with me in the solemn exercise, and while thus drawing near to God, he drew near to me. The power of faith was given ; I regarded the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, as dying in my stead ; and with all my heart I believed in him as my Redeemer, my Advocate, and my Saviour. It was done to me according to my faith. While penitently kneeling before God, there sprang up within me such peace, and joy, and holy love, as no language can express. More than forty years have passed

away since that happy hour ; yet the recollection of it is as fresh and vivid as ever. I had no more doubt of the pardoning mercy of God, than of my existence ; for my heart, which had been the seat of guilty fear, and of anguish unutterable, overflowed with filial gratitude and confidence toward him.

From that hour the bias of my inmost nature was changed, and I entered upon a new course of life. The love of sin was gone, and a fixed abhorrence of evil, accompanied by great tenderness of conscience, took its place. In the society of ungodly men I could no longer take any pleasure. Devotion became an element of my very being ; I went to the sacramental table, and there “discerned the Lord’s body ;” the study of the Holy Scriptures and of Christian theology became my delight ; and, in one word, I entered upon that mode of conduct which I hope to pursue till it shall please God to end my earthly pilgrimage. Since that memorable period I have been a member of the Wesleyan community, who have borne with my infirmities, and invariably treated me with Christian kindness. I am sensible of much unfaithfulness and inadvertency ; but have been preserved from wickedly departing from God. I trust in Christ for continued and final acceptance ;



and can, with sincerity, say, "Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee."

Here, then, I stand, an object of God's mercy in Jesus Christ; and he from whom every good and perfect gift proceeds, was pleased to convey to me the blessings of his salvation through the instrumentality of the Wesleyan Methodists. Through them I received the knowledge of the truth, and in my intercourse with them I was made a partaker of "the hidden manna," and "a white stone," with "a new name written" upon it, "which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth it." Men may tell me this is all delusion, error, enthusiasm. They may call it theft and murder, if they please. I know, with the certainty of personal consciousness, that it is the love of God shed abroad in my heart by the Holy Ghost given unto me. The trials of forty years, in a world like this, are a sufficient test of any man's principles; and I here aver, that the reading, the prayer, the conversation, the experience of that period, have all served to strengthen the conviction, that the change which took place in my views and feelings on the occasion just described, was indeed the work of God.

My heart therefore cleaves to the Wesleyan Methodists, above all people upon the face of

the earth. With them I purpose to live and die. Had it not pleased God to send them to the village where I was born, what, in all probability, should I have been this day? Perhaps a Romish idolater, bowing before a graven image, and confiding in the ministrations of an erring priest for those blessings which can only be obtained by faith in the Lord Jesus. Perhaps a notorious profligate, hardened in guilt and presumption. Perhaps a lost spirit in hell! And what, in all probability, would have now been the state of my native village, but for Wesleyan Methodism? Unless some other means had been provided, the people would unquestionably have been divided into Romish idolaters and practical heathens.

Multitudes, I doubt not, both in the established Church, and among the evangelical Dissenters, have received the same "common salvation" in their several communities which I have described, and therefore cherish for them an attachment similar to that which I bear toward the Wesleyan body. I honour that feeling; and earnestly pray, that the Lord would, among all denominations, multiply the number of those who know him as their Saviour from sin; for my heart tells me, that what some persons censoriously call "sectarian af-

fection," is perfectly consistent with catholic love. "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity!"

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## CHAPTER II.

*I find, in connection with the Wesleyan Methodists, every means of Christian edification and usefulness.*

I CONCEIVE, that when a man has been brought to the saving knowledge of God in any religious community, he should not lightly withdraw himself from the people who have been a means of conferring upon him so mighty a benefit; inasmuch as he has, in his own experience, direct proof, that the presence and blessing of God are with them. Yet there may be cases of this nature, which not only justify a separation, but even render it matter of duty. Should these people depart from essential truth, countenance dangerous error, become criminally lax in discipline, interfere with his just liberty in his attempts to promote the spiritual benefit of others, or neglect to provide sufficient means for his advancement in divine knowledge and personal religion; it may be even his duty to connect himself with

some other body of Christians, in union with whom his advantages will be greater ; for a man's own salvation is his highest concern. "Where can I receive the greatest spiritual benefit ?" is my first inquiry. My second is, "Where can I the most effectually serve my generation by the will of God ?" In the course of forty years I have had some opportunity for looking abroad, and observing the creeds and order of different bodies of Christians ; and I am free to declare my conscientious preference of the Wesleyan Methodists.

One great duty of Christianity, and means of spiritual improvement, is, the public worship of Almighty God. His people are to unite in confession, supplication, intercession, and thanksgiving ; and he has promised to be with them in their "holy convocations," for purposes thus sacred, and intimately connected with his glory. Perhaps the best form of public prayer, ever compiled, is the liturgy of the Church of England, which is used, to the advantage of the worshippers, in several of the Methodist chapels, especially on the morning of the Lord's day. Yet I should be sorry to be confined to this form, excellent as it is ; for it cannot, in the nature of things, meet every case of human necessity : nor ought either ministers

or private Christians to be hindered in the exercise of that gift of prayer which the Lord the Spirit has conferred upon them for the edification of his church. In the use of this important gift not a few of them greatly excel.\*

No Christians in the land, nor perhaps in the world, are so highly favoured as the Methodists, with respect to that delightful part of divine worship, singing the praises of God. Their Collection of Hymns, formed by their venerable founder, is one of surpassing excellence. His own eulogium upon it falls below its real worth. "In what other publication of

\* Forms of prayer may be used to advantage on some occasions. But making their use a term of membership is travelling out of the record. The difference between using the forms of the Church of England as Methodists and using them as Churchmen is this,—as Methodists they may use or omit, abridge or modify them, as circumstances require. But if the Wesleyan Methodists should unite with the established Church, then they must go the uniform course. They must swallow the Athanasian and Nicene Creeds, with their anathemas, and read to heaven every abominable sinner who *by law* is entitled to *Christian burial*! And what is to be gained by all this? What wonderful advantage is to be derived, on either side of the water, from putting on this grievous yoke? We can use as much of the Prayer Book as we please now. And now we can omit what does not suit us, a liberty we should not have were we to take the gown.—*Am. Ed.*

the kind," says he, "have you so distinct and full an account of Scriptural Christianity? such a declaration of the heights and depths of religion, speculative and practical? so strong cautions against the most plausible errors; particularly those that are now most prevalent? and so clear directions for making your calling and election sure; for perfecting holiness in the fear of God?" Having spoken of the poetical character of the hymns, he adds, "What is of infinitely more moment than the spirit of poetry, is the spirit of piety: and I trust all persons of real judgment will find this breathing through the whole Collection. It is in this view chiefly that I would recommend it to every truly pious reader, as a means of raising or quickening the spirit of devotion; of confirming his faith; of enlivening his hope; and of kindling or increasing his love to God and man."

Most of these unrivalled hymns are well known to have been written by Mr. Charles Wesley, and embrace every subject connected with personal religion. There is scarcely a feeling of the heart, from the first dawn of divine light upon the understanding, and desire after God, till the believer's triumphant flight to the celestial paradise, which is not here

expressed in language beautifully forcible and appropriate. The Wesleyan Hymn Book appears to immense advantage when placed beside the rude and rugged verse of Sternhold and Hopkins; and the vapid strains of Tate and Brady. Compared with the sublime and energetic compositions of Mr. Charles Wesley, the collections of devotional poetry which have been recently formed, and introduced into several of the churches, are very defective. Most of these manuals contain some of Charles Wesley's hymns, but generally altered, *and always for the worse*. The beautiful poetry of the real author is often superseded by what is not even good prose; and the spirit of living piety, in most instances, is, as much as possible, extracted from them. In the social circle, in select religious meetings, as well as in the regular course of public worship, the singing of the Wesleyan hymns has ever been attended with the richest blessing; for they are suited to all occasions, and to every state of mind.

Upward of eighty years ago Mr. Wesley, therefore, remarked, with respect to the public assemblies of his people: "Nor are their solemn addresses to God interrupted either by the formal drawl of a parish clerk, the screaming of boys, who bawl out what they neither

feel nor understand, or the unseasonable and unmeaning impertinence of a voluntary on the organ. When it is seasonable to sing praise to God, they do it with the spirit, and with the understanding also; not in the miserable, scandalous doggerel of Hopkins and Sternhold, but in psalms and hymns which are both sense and poetry; such as would sooner provoke a critic to turn Christian, than a Christian to turn critic. What they sing is therefore a proper continuation of the spiritual and reasonable service; being selected for that end (not by a poor humdrum wretch, who can scarce read what he drones out with such an air of importance, but) by one who knows what he is about, and how to connect the preceding with the following part of the service. Nor does he take just 'two staves,' but more or less, as may best raise the soul to God; especially when sung in well-composed and well-adapted tunes, not by a handful of wild, unawakened striplings, but by a whole serious congregation; and these, not lolling at ease, or in the indecent posture of sitting, drawling out one word after another, but all standing before God, and praising him lustily and with a good courage."\*

\* Here are several thrusts, which it will be well for Methodists upon both sides of the water to heed.—*Am. Ed.*



His observations upon the general religious services of the Methodists are equally just and striking: "Surely, then, of all the people in Great Britain, the Methodists would be the most inexcusable, should they let any opportunity slip of attending that worship which has so many advantages, should they prefer any before it, or not continually improve by the advantages they enjoy! What can be pleaded for them, if they do not worship God in spirit and in truth; if they are still outward worshippers only, approaching God with their lips, while their hearts are far from him? Yea, if having known him; they do not daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ!"

The preaching of the gospel is an institution of the Lord Jesus, which he will perpetuate and sanction till the end of time. And here, again, I conceive that, as a Wesleyan Methodist, I have eminent and peculiar advantages. The Wesleyan ministry, as a whole, is Scriptural, evangelical, zealous, plain, faithful, and practical. It consists not of metaphysical speculations, dark and powerless; nor of secular politics; nor of the traditions of men; but is generally an exposition of God's own word; giving a just and decided prominence to the

leading truths of the gospel, applied to the consciences of the people, who are often classified, and separately addressed, as careless sinners, penitent seekers of salvation, or as sincere believers in Christ, exposed to the vicissitudes and trials of life. Many speak disrespectfully of this ministry, who never attended it, and therefore know not what it is. He is the best physician who effects the greatest number of cures ; and he is the best preacher who turns the greatest number of ignorant and wicked men to Christ and holiness. As to the moral effects of Methodist preaching, let the nation\* bear witness ; for those effects are everywhere manifest.

I love the Wesleyan tenets, because of their consistency with the Scriptures and with each other, as well as because of their encouraging and sanctifying tendency. The fallen state of man ; the divinity and atonement of Christ ; the universal redemption of mankind ; the necessity of repentance ; full and free justification by faith in the Lord Jesus ; the witness of the Spirit ; the new birth, as a recovery of fallen man to real holiness ; Christian perfection ; the

\* Not the British "nation" merely, but the *whole Christian world*—yea, many lands of pagan darkness.—*Am. Ed.*

necessity of entire practical conformity to the will of God; and a future state of endless retribution: these momentous truths are the staple of Methodist sermons, and are often enforced with irresistible earnestness. On these subjects there is no hesitation, no concealment, no faltering, no "reserve," but the utmost explicitness and fidelity. For this ministry is invariably exercised by converted men. It is an unalterable principle, that no one shall ever be admitted to it, even in its lowest degree, who cannot give a satisfactory account of his personal reconciliation with God, and who does not exhibit in his life proofs that he is a "new creature." "We have believed, and therefore do we speak," is the scrutinized profession of every Wesleyan preacher.

An itinerant ministry, though connected with inconveniences in reference to the pastoral charge, has many advantages in regard of the pulpit. When a man has to address the same congregation every week, and that through the entire course of his life, in order to avoid an appearance of sameness in his sermons, he is under a strong temptation to render the peculiar doctrines of Christianity less prominent in his general ministrations than is consistent with edification. The case is different when

two or more ministers alternately occupy the same pulpit, and that for a stated period only. Several men will exhibit the same truths in various aspects; and yet each of them may be important, interesting, and instructive. The Wesleyan ministry, therefore, while it maintains an identity of character, preserves its freshness and life. The preachers are diversified in their talents; yet they "all speak the same thing," "being perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment." In attending a Methodist chapel, whoever may be the preacher, I am under no apprehension that I shall hear "divers and strange doctrines."

Let the following anecdote illustrate my meaning. A few years ago a Jew became a member of a Methodist society, under peculiar circumstances. He was a commercial traveller, and received impressions favourable to Christianity in consequence of his intercourse with its professors. These led to inquiries on the subject; and the result was, a conviction that Jesus is the Christ. Having believed in him, the son of Abraham felt it his duty to connect himself with the followers of the Lord. With the various bodies of Christians he was equally unacquainted; but he recollected what he had frequently witnessed in the travellers' room, at

inns, on the morning of the Lord's day. The persons present often asked one another what place of worship they designed to attend. One would say, "I am going to the church;" and then the question was usually asked, "Is the gospel preached there?" Another would say, "I am going to the Dissenting meeting;" and then the inquiry followed, "Is the minister orthodox?" In some instances the answer was, "I am going to the Wesleyan chapel:" but he never heard any one ask whether the men who officiated there were orthodox, or preached the gospel. All seemed, as a matter of course, to take these points for granted. This led him to make inquiries respecting the Wesleyan body, and at length to join them. To the fact which the commercial travellers assumed, I can bear willing testimony.

Heterodoxy is indeed laid to the charge of the Methodists. In a tract recently printed at Leeds, and extensively circulated by clergymen, it is said, that "Methodism has contracted no inconsiderable portion of the heresies of Donatus, Sabellius, Calvin, and Socinus." But this is a calumny whoever was its author. There is neither a Donatist, a Sabellian, a Calvinist, nor a Socinian, in the entire body of Methodist ministers; whatever the Leeds

Tractarians, or their Oxford brethren may feel themselves at liberty to assert. "Nay, were you to recite the whole catalogue of heresies enumerated by Bishop Pearson, it might be asked, Who can lay any one of these to their charge?" Thus spake the venerable John Wesley ninety-six years ago; and his words are as true at the present time as they were then.

In reference to the ministrations of his fellow-labourers, this eminent man thus addressed himself to one of his personal friends: "Nor is it a little advantage to hear a preacher whom you know to live as he speaks, speaking the genuine gospel of present salvation through faith, wrought in the heart by the Holy Ghost; declaring present, free, full justification, and enforcing every branch of inward and outward holiness. And this you hear done in the most clear, plain, simple, unaffected language; yet with an earnestness becoming the importance of the subject, and with the demonstration of the Spirit."

To the Lord's supper, as one of the sacraments which Christ hath ordained in his church, a peculiar sacredness has ever been justly attached, by sincere and well-instructed Christians. It is a standing memorial of the great

sacrifice which was offered to God for the sins of the world, and is one of the seals of the evangelical covenant. "By eating of this bread, and drinking of this cup," the disciples of Jesus are to "show forth his death," till he shall come to raise the dead, to judge the world, and to take his people to their everlasting home. As a means of grace, devout Christians have always realized great spiritual benefit in the use of it. Their faith in their dying Lord has been strengthened, and their love to him inflamed. They have received a deeper impression of their obligations to serve him ; and their affection for each other, while partaking of the same sacred elements, has been confirmed and increased. In the Methodist chapels this ordinance is always administered according to the form of the Church of England, but with the addition of appropriate hymns, exhortation, and extemporary prayer. It is not open to every one, indiscriminately ; but to the members of the society, and to such other persons as, after due examination, may be deemed suitably prepared : for it is a heinous offence against God to administer it, knowingly, to any one who is openly wicked. "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup," 1 Cor. xi, 28.

In reference to the administration of this sacred ordinance in his own chapels, Mr. Wesley thus addressed one of his people: "Although we cannot say that either the unworthiness of the minister, or the unholiness of some of the communicants, deprives the rest of a blessing from God; yet do they greatly lessen the comfort of receiving. But these discouragements are removed from you. You have proof that he who administers fears God; and you have no reason to believe that any of your fellow-communicants walk unworthy of their profession. Add to this, that the whole service is performed in a decent and solemn manner, is enlivened by hymns suitable to the occasion, and concluded with prayer that comes not out of feigned lips."

In addition to these divinely-appointed ordinances, the Wesleyan Methodists have several prudential regulations, adapted to the advancement of piety, from which they have derived great spiritual benefits. Such are class and band meetings, quarterly love-feasts, watch-nights, prayer-meetings, and meetings for the renewal of their covenant with God; for all of which they cherish a becoming regard. The most important of these services is the weekly class-meeting, which usually consists of from ten to



twenty persons, less or more, who assemble for the express purpose of relating to each other their feelings and purposes with respect to religion, of praying with each other, and of receiving from one of their company suitable instruction and encouragement. These meetings are always enlivened by hymns of praise to God ; the fruitful and sanctified genius of Mr. Charles Wesley having furnished several admirable compositions adapted to these retired and hallowed services.

If meetings of this kind are not appointed in Holy Scripture, as matter of absolute duty, they are in full accordance with the general tenor of the inspired books, and have the direct sanction of many particular passages. The Psalmist, full of grateful joy, exclaims, "Come and hear, all ye that fear God, and I will declare what he hath done for my soul," Psalm lxvi, 16. In another place, describing the prevailing bias of his heart, he says to God, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts," Psalm cxix, 63. When sin and ungodliness abounded, in the degenerate days of Malachi, it is stated, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another : and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was writ-

ten before him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." Mal. iii, 16, 17. That Christians are bound to take an affectionate interest in each other's preservation from sin, and perseverance in the ways of God, and that they are to use means for the promotion of these objects, no one can doubt, who reads the New Testament with due attention. "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord," Col. iii, 16. "Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." Heb. iii, 12, 13. "And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching," Heb. x, 24, 25. "Confess your faults one to another,

and pray one for another, that ye may be healed," James v, 16.

In the Methodist class-meeting the husband and the wife, the parent and the child, the master and the servant, the young convert and the "old disciple," the day-labourer and the man of property, often meet together; and, while they speak of the things of God, not only forget their several distinctions, and feel their perfect oneness in their common Lord, but are also preserved from all unworthy jealousies in their general intercourse with each other. After the perplexities and cares of the week, the fightings without and the fears within, they are strengthened and comforted by the blessing of God upon their mutual sympathy and faith.

The members of various classes, and often of several societies, meet in the quarterly love-feasts, to declare the loving-kindness of the Lord, and generally with the happiest effect. The weak are encouraged; the spirit of unity is cherished; and the minds of all are stirred up by way of remembrance. While the work of God, in the conversion of sinful men, is proclaimed, the glory which is due to his name is given in cheerful songs by the united assembly.

Watch-nights are held at any period that

may be deemed expedient, but especially at the close of the year. On that occasion the chapels are generally crowded with serious worshippers ; for Christians of other denominations often join in the impressive service. After a sermon, the time is occupied, till after the midnight hour, in singing appropriate hymns, in exhortation, and prayer. On the first sabbath in the year, the larger societies usually meet, apart from the public congregation, and return thanks for past mercies ; acknowledge and lament past unfaithfulness ; ask renewed forgiveness, and richer communications of divine influence ; receive the Lord's supper ; and again unitedly pledge themselves to an entire and persevering dedication to the service of God, that they may be prepared for their removal into eternity. These are usually seasons of deep and holy feeling. The pious dead are remembered ; the coming of the Son of man to judgment is anticipated ; the world is seen in all its emptiness and vanity ; and nothing appears important but salvation by Jesus Christ.

In these services I have been accustomed stately to unite, from an early period of my life ; and the spiritual benefit which I have received in the use of them is to me matter of adoring gratitude to the God of all grace.

Yet the full extent of that benefit, I most solemnly believe, will only be seen in the light of eternity, which will make manifest the true character of every object and of every person.

The duty of every Christian man to labour for the world's good is undeniable. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." Every man upon earth is my neighbour; whom I am bound thus to love; and that, "not in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth," 1 John iii, 18. My love is not to expend itself in general and fruitless wishes for the welfare of mankind. I am to visit the sick, and relieve the poor; to reprove the wicked, and instruct the ignorant, that they may share in the blessings of the Christian salvation. "Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him; let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins," James v, 19, 20. Nor is this a matter of choice; for "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not; to him it is sin," James iv, 17. Should any man perish in consequence of our neglect, we cannot be guiltless of his blood. Nor do we find any cautions in the New Testament against the employment of a lay agency in the advance-

ment of the kingdom of Christ upon earth. "He that is not with me," said our blessed Saviour, "is against me ; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad," Matt. xii, 30. "There are no neuters in this war. Every one must be either with Christ, or against him ; either a loyal subject, or a rebel. And there are none upon earth who neither promote nor obstruct his kingdom. For he that does not gather souls to God, scatters them from him."

It is but little that any one can do in his private capacity, in reference to the spread of divine truth, and the conversion of the ungodly part of mankind. The friends of Christ, therefore, should associate together, and act unitedly in the cause of their great Master. This has been the practice of the Wesleyan Methodists from the origin of their societies ; and in connection with them every individual, whose heart is actuated by the love of Christ, is favoured with ample means and opportunities for advancing the kingdom of Christ in the world.

Among other means of usefulness, prayer-meetings deserve to be especially mentioned. These are often held at an early hour in the morning, in the vestries of chapels, in alleys and neglected neighbourhoods, in cottages, on week-day and Sunday evenings ; and afford

appropriate exercise to the gifts and piety of devoted men, who are concerned for the enlargement of the church, and the conversion of the world. Many careless people have been brought under religious impressions in these means of grace, and others have found the Lord, whom they earnestly sought. When St. Peter was delivered out of prison at midnight, by the ministry of an angel, he directed his steps to the house of a Christian family in Jerusalem, where a meeting of this kind was held, even at that hour: for "many were gathered together praying," Acts xii, 12.

Those who have an aptitude for teaching children the elements of learning and of religion, may find ample scope for the exercise of their powers in the Wesleyan Sunday-schools, where the offspring of the labouring classes are collected together, for the purpose of being taught to read the Holy Scriptures, to sing the praises of God, to sanctify the sabbath, to obey their parents, to believe in their Saviour, and to love him in sincerity.

Religious Tract Societies now generally adopt the plan of loan distribution. They divide neglected localities into districts, the houses of which are visited in order. A tract is left at each, which is called for at a specified

time, and another is left in its place. Many devout and zealous persons are employed in this kind of service, and are often brought most beneficially into intercourse with sabbath-breakers, the neglecters of public worship, the readers of Sunday newspapers, and other ungodly characters, as well as with the afflicted, who need temporal relief and spiritual help, and gratefully receive both.

Strangers' Friend Societies afford beneficial employment for persons of religious sobriety and experience, of both sexes. Their design is to minister both to the temporal and spiritual wants of the destitute, in seasons of sickness. While sums of money, to a greater or less amount, are given to them, they are directed to the Saviour for blessings still more rich and substantial, and are commended to the compassion of God in prayer. By the labours of these messengers of mercy many a life has been saved, and many a miserable wanderer from the ways of God reclaimed.

The very extensive and successful missions of the Wesleyan Methodists, existing in every quarter of the globe, afford useful employment to a numerous class of willing labourers at home, who circulate missionary intelligence, contained in periodical publications, and collect



pecuniary supplies for carrying on this extensive work of Christian benevolence.

In the Wesleyan societies those who have acquired a character of established piety, and are well instructed in the things of God, find useful exercise for their varied talents and zeal as the leaders of classes, exhorters, and local preachers: and such as are judged suitably qualified are called into the itinerant ministry, or are sent as ambassadors to the heathen, among whom many a devoted missionary sleeps in Jesus.

Such as "handle the pen of the writer," and are expert in accounts, are able to sanctify these valuable qualifications by acting as secretaries and stewards of the various societies and funds of the body.

It is demanded of me in the present day, in common with my brethren in general, to renounce all connection with the Wesleyan Methodists, and confine myself exclusively to the religious services of the established Church.\*

\* In this country, thank God, we have no "established church." But the *daughter* here claims nothing less than the *mother* over the water. Here, as well as there, "*the Church is the only channel of divine grace*;" and *we*, poor miserable outcasts, who are of "the sects," are often in great *charity* invited to avail ourselves of God's covenanted mercies by coming into *the Church*.—*Am. Ed.*

The demand is urged in the most clamorous manner, especially in books and pamphlets, with which our societies are inundated. The ground of the demand I will consider in another place ; and will confine myself at present to the sacrifices which I am required to make.

In becoming a Churchman, according to the modern doctrine, I must entirely and for ever renounce all connection with the institutions of Methodism. I must forsake that ministry by which I was first turned to God, and under which I have been edified, quickened in my Christian course, strengthened, and encouraged a thousand times. I must never again unite in acts of devotion with my Wesleyan friends, whom I love as my own soul, and who I believe will be my fellow-worshippers in heaven for ever. I must never more enter a Methodist class-meeting, nor a prayer-meeting, nor a watch-night service, nor a covenant-meeting, nor a missionary-meeting, nor a Sunday-school ; nor must I distribute another Methodist tract, nor collect a penny for the Wesleyan missions, either in cannibal Feejee, or in any other part of the world, however wretched and destitute. The missionaries and their families, toiling and exposing their lives among savage men, may perish. The heathen children, collected to-

gether in Christian schools, may all be scattered, and these young disciples abandoned to abominable idolatries; the converted pagans, happily united in Christian fellowship, and walking in the fear of the Lord, and the comfort of the Holy Ghost, may all relapse into their old superstitions, and perish for ever, so far as I am concerned. I must treat my Wesleyan brethren as heathen men and publicans; not only denying their Christianity, but also withholding from them acts of common humanity. Should I ever be officially connected with any public funds, designed for the casual relief of the destitute, I must be particularly careful that such widows and aged men as attend Methodist chapels shall be "neglected in the ministration;" so that, if they will not violate their consciences, they shall, as much as possible, be denied the necessaries of life; for this is a practice now somewhat extensively adopted. If the public prints are to be credited, a gentleman of unexceptionable morals and respectability has been repelled from the Lord's table for attending a Wesleyan missionary-meeting,\* and a poor blind boy has been denied a clerical certificate of admission into a hospital, (where he hoped to recover his sight,) because his

\* At Hungerford, in Berkshire.

father attends the Wesleyan ministry.\* It is required of me to enter into the spirit of these acts.

While all these sacrifices are required, and I am commanded to incur all this fearful responsibility, what is offered to me as an equivalent? Why, simply, that I shall attend the services of the parish church; for nothing more is proposed. Very well. We will assume, that the officiating clergyman is as wise and holy as the seraphic Fletcher, of Madeley. He reads the prayers with a holy ardour, in which it is a privilege to join; and he preaches the truth with the zeal and energy of an apostle. Yet even these advantages do not compensate for the loss of those other various means of edification, in the use of which I have long realized the communion of saints, and often felt the powers of the world to come. In receiving the Lord's supper, too, I must kneel by the side of men who often utter profane oaths, who get drunk, and whose conduct in many respects is a scandal to the very name of religion. With the spirits of such men I can have no Christian sympathy in that most sacred ordinance.

But the lives of even the best of men are uncertain; and for any thing I know to the con-

\* At Biddeford.

trary, the clergyman to whom I surrender myself will die the next month. Perhaps the patron of the living is a right honourable advocate of what are called "Church principles." He presents the benefice to a youthful disciple of the same school, who is far more conversant with the "Tracts for the Times," and the Sermons and Lectures of Mr. Newman, than with the Epistles of St. Paul, and the writings of the reformers. His very gait and manner indicate concealment and reserve: the absence of that frankness and honesty, which mark the character of a genuine Englishman. He walks with downcast eyes, a measured step, his arms crossed upon his breast; and he bows to the Lord's table whenever he passes it. What is the doctrine that he teaches? Absolutely "another gospel!" He boldly denies the great truth of Christianity, the most prominent subject of St. Paul's Epistles, and of all Protestant churches,—gratuitous justification by faith in Christ; he denies the sufficiency of Scripture, extols tradition, condemns the reformers, praises Papal Rome, anathematizes all Protestant churches that hold not episcopacy, and preaches "the Church," rather than its divine Head, as "full of grace and truth." Such is the shape of his theology.

“If shape it might be call’d, that shape has none  
 Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb ;  
 Or substance might be call’d, that shadow seems.”

To complete the injury, he turns his face to the “altar,” as he is pleased to call “the table of the Lord,” and his back upon the congregation, when reading the liturgy, so as to be very indistinctly heard, if heard at all, by the people who have come to worship the God of their fathers with the spirit and the understanding.\* Thus deprived of the prayers, when the sermon commences,

“The hungry sheep look up, and are not fed,  
 But swoll’n with wind, and the rank mist they draw,  
 Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread.”

I confess that I could not, with a due regard for my own salvation, place myself under a ministry consisting of such “weak and beggarly elements,” when I might, in the Wes-

\* But a few months since we attended an afternoon service in the church of the Rev. Mr. J——n of B——n. Here we found the Romish arrangement. The altar in the rear, with light-stands upon it, and a cross over it. To this cross the Rev. gentleman and his assistant, a young clergyman, bowed time after time during the service ; and after the benediction, when we left the place, were upon their knees before the cross, no doubt in prayer to *God*. We felt unutterable things. More than once we asked ourselves, How far is this from Popery ?—*Am. Ed.*

leyan chapel, hear the unadulterated gospel of the Lord Jesus. Nor could I answer it to God, publicly, and of set purpose, to countenance such a perversion of his truth and worship. It has indeed been asserted, that error loses its noxious power, and becomes comparatively harmless, when uttered by a man who is in the "apostolical succession." Of that "succession" I shall have occasion to speak in another place; but concerning such error as that against which I contend, one of the very chief of the apostles used very different language. With a direct reference to the cardinal doctrine of justification by faith, St. Paul has not only said, but written, and that in the name of Almighty God, "There be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But 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." He reiterates the awful asseveration: "As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." Gal. i, 7-9.

Besides, if I renounce my connection with the Wesleyan body, in compliance with the clamours of certain clerical agitators, I countenance principles which require every other

man to follow my example, and which would close the door of every Methodist chapel in the world. But I ask, in the name of all that is sacred, when arrangements are in progress for the overthrow of Protestant Christianity in every land, is this a time when a single Protestant testimony to the truth should be silenced? Let the answer be given in the significant words of an eloquent French writer, "No ! no ! A thousand times no !"

While I enjoy every means of personal edification, and of usefulness to the world, I cannot abandon them without betraying foul ingratitude both to God and man ; and without setting an example, the consequences of which I am not prepared to answer for before the great tribunal. To do violence to the religious feelings and habits of large bodies of sincere and devout people is a hazardous experiment, and one upon which a wise man would not hastily venture. It would be a sure means of turning many of them out of the way of righteousness.



## CHAPTER III.

*I am perfectly satisfied with my position as a member of  
the universal church of Christ.*

THE charge which is the most frequently urged against the Wesleyan Methodists of the present day is that of schism; an evil which is opposed to the unity of the church, and is expressly condemned in the New Testament. This charge is usually preferred without ceremony, and without any attempt at proof, as if it admitted of no dispute. Schism is assumed to be separation. The Wesleyan Methodists have their own places of worship, and seldom attend the religious services of the Church of England. They are therefore undeniably separated from her pale, and, of course, are guilty of schism. Such is the usual clerical mode of reasoning on the subject, if reasoning it may be called. But the questions involved in this matter are too important to be dismissed in this summary manner. The dearest rights of a Christian people are not to be wrested from them by the sinister application of a hard name. We plead, Not guilty, to the charge; and appeal from the authority of rash and censorious men to the sacred oracles; to the common sense of

mankind ; and, above all, to the great Master whose we are, and whom we serve.

To the true unity of the church no man that fears God can be indifferent. It is dear to the heart of our Saviour Christ. It was one leading object of his sacrificial death, as it is of the evangelical ministry ; he prayed for it on the memorable night which preceded his crucifixion ; it forms one principal end of the Holy Spirit's operations ; and it is one great design of all the dispensations of his providence, truth, and grace. Caiaphas was overruled by a divine power, so as to utter a truth the full bearing of which he did not understand. He " spake not of himself : but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation ; and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad," John xi, 51, 52. With reference to his disciples the Lord Jesus prayed, " Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are," John xvii, 11. He added, " Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word ; that they all may be one ; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us :

that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them ; that they may be one, even as we are one : I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one ; and that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me. Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am ; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me : for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father, the world hath not known thee : but I have known thee, and these have known that thou hast sent me. And I have declared unto them thy name, and will declare it : that the love wherewith thou hast loved me may be in them, and I in them." John xvii, 20-26. St. Paul speaks on the same deeply-interesting subject where he declares that God's design in "having made known" to the apostles "the mystery of his will," was, "that in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ; even in him," Eph. i, 10. In another place he connects this design with the sacrifice of the cross. "It pleased the Father," says he, "that in him" (Christ) "should all

fulness dwell ; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself ; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven," Col. i, 19, 20.

From these passages, thus largely quoted, the reader may perceive the kind of unity for which our Lord prayed, and which he is pleased to accomplish by means of his gospel. It is not such a unity as may exist in a promiscuous crowd, consisting of persons of various characters, devout and profane, pious and ungodly, who may perchance submit to the same ecclesiastical order, meet for religious worship in the same place, and use the same forms of prayer and thanksgiving ; but a unity of a far more deep and sacred nature, and such as the unsanctified can neither understand nor realize.

1. It is a unity which springs from a living faith in Christ. The persons mentioned by the Lord Jesus in his prayer are such as the Father had "given" him ; and hence they had "come" to him, and he had received them. "All that the Father giveth me shall come unto me ; and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out," John vi, 37 His prayer was also prospective, and comprehended such as "should believe in" him through the apostolic

ministry. There is a vital union between Christ and those who believe in him with the heart unto righteousness. They are "in Christ," Rom. viii, 1; "Christ liveth in them," Gal. ii, 20; Christ "dwells in their hearts by faith," Eph. iii, 17; "Christ is in them the hope of glory," Col. i, 27. Their unity with each other results from their common union with Christ, and corresponds with the union which subsists between him and the Father. "That they may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they may be one in us." They are one with each other, not by virtue of an external order, however complete, but by a real and saving union with the Father and the Son. The true unity of the church is the unity of divine love, of which the Holy Ghost is the author. It is therefore called, "the unity of the Spirit," Eph. iv, 3; and "love in the Spirit," Col. i, 8. Its increase is made a subject of prayer: "This I pray, that your love may abound yet more and more in knowledge and in all judgment," Phil. i, 9; "for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God," 1 John iv, 7. Perhaps no man ever expressed himself, on this subject, in language more appropriate than the venerable Charles Wesley, in his incomparable hymns on

the Communion of Saints, of which the following stanzas are a specimen :—

“ Father, Son, and Spirit, hear  
Faith’s effectual, fervent prayer !  
Hear, and our petitions seāl,  
Let us now the answer feel.

“ Still our fellowship increase ;  
Knit us in the bond of peace :  
Join our new-born spirits, join  
Each to each, and all to thine !

“ Build us in one body up,  
Call’d in one high calling’s hope :  
One the Spirit, whom we claim,  
One the pure baptismal flame :

“ One the faith, and common Lord :  
One the Father lives adored,  
Over, through, and in us all,  
God incomprehensible.

“ One with God, the Source of bliss,  
Ground of our communion this :  
Life of all that live below,  
Let thine emanations flow !

“ Rise eternal in our heart !  
Thou our long-sought Eden art :  
Father, Son, and Holy Ghost,  
Be to us what Adam lost !”

2. The unity in question is such a unity as subsists between men and the holy angels. When man sinned, the angels, retaining their

allegiance to God, and burning with love to him, were ready, as the ministers of his will, to avenge their Maker's quarrel. Christ, by his death, and especially by an application of its benefits, having reconciled men to God, has reconciled them to all the different orders of angelic beings ; so that these holy and happy spirits that excel in strength, these flames of fire, with the pardoned and sanctified children of God of the human race, form one vast " family ;" and things on earth, and things in heaven, are for ever reconciled, and made one : one in pure affection, one in purpose, one in employment.

3. It is not a temporary unity for which the Saviour prayed, but one that will be continued everlastingly, and is therefore peculiar to those who are heirs of eternal life. The subjects of it are not to be separated, either in " the hour of death," or in " the day of judgment ;" but are to " be with Christ," and to " behold his glory," in the heavenly world. Upon earth the tares and the wheat grow together ; the gospel net encloses the good and bad fishes ; but the final separation shall take place in " that day," when God shall judge the secrets of men's hearts. Even the domestic relations will not be carried into the eternal state. Neither do men there

“marry,” nor are “women given in marriage.” No relation but that of holy love will be perpetuated for ever. With a prayer for that unity our Saviour concluded his intercession upon earth; and such a unity he is pleased to effect through all time, by the power of his Spirit, and the instrumentality of his gospel.

That blessed unity was perhaps never seen in greater perfection and beauty than in the first Christian church at Jerusalem, consisting of many thousand people. For a season their love to each other was so fervent, that they became indifferent to the rights of property. Their case is the more remarkable, because there is reason to believe that a considerable proportion of them had, a little while before, joined in the wicked clamour for the crucifixion of the Son of God: so great was the change that was wrought in their inmost nature when, believing in Christ, they were regenerated and sanctified by his Spirit. “They continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers. And all that believed were together, and had all things common; and sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had need. And they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking



bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved." Acts ii, 42-47. At a subsequent period it is added, "And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common." Chap. iv, 32. Such was the spirit of primitive Christianity, and such the true unity of the church!

"Happy the souls that first believed,  
To Jesus and each other cleaved:  
Join'd by the unction from above,  
In mystic fellowship of love.

"Meek, simple followers of the Lamb,  
They lived, and spake, and thought the same;  
They joyfully conspired to raise  
Their ceaseless sacrifice of praise.

"With grace abundantly endued,  
A pure, believing multitude;  
They all were of one heart and soul,  
And only love inspired the whole."

What, then, is schism? The word, in some of its forms, is used with regard to things, as well as to men. When employed in reference

to men, it sometimes expresses neither praise nor blame. There was a schism among the Jews when they could not agree in their opinions respecting Christ, John vii, 43; and between the Pharisees and Sadducees, when St. Paul declared that he was "a Pharisee, and the son of a Pharisee," Acts xxiii, 7. But, so far as Christians are concerned, schism is the absence of divine love, manifesting itself in a want of kindness and sympathy, and in unholy strife and emulation. Its very essence is a dogmatic, exclusive, and uncharitable spirit. It prevailed to a fearful extent in the Corinthian church, where it met with the just rebukes of St. Paul. "Now, I beseech you, brethren," says he, "by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions" (schisms) "among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment. For it hath been declared to me of you, my brethren, by them which are of the house of Chloe, that there are contentions among you. Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul; and I of Apollos; and I of Cephas; and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? was Paul crucified for you? or were ye baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I bap-

tized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius ; lest any should say that I had baptized in mine own name." 1 Cor. i, 10-15.

In the third chapter he resumes the subject :  
" For whereas there is among you envying, and strife, and divisions," (factions, as the word is rendered in the margin,) " are ye not carnal, and walk as men ? For while one saith, I am of Paul ; and another, I am of Apollos ; are ye not carnal ? Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man ?" Chap. iii, 3-5.

This spirit the Corinthians carried with them even to the Lord's supper. Hence the following solemn rebuke :—" When ye come together in the church, I hear that there be divisions" (schisms) " among you ; and I partly believe it. For there must be also heresies" (sects) " among you, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you. When ye come together therefore into one place, this is not to eat the Lord's supper. For in eating every one taketh before other his own supper ; and one is hungry, and another is drunken. What, have ye not houses to eat and to drink in ? or despise ye the church of God, and shame them that have not ? What shall I

say to you? shall I praise you in this? I praise you not." 1 Cor. xi, 18-22. It would appear from this statement, that when they met "in one place," to partake of the holy eucharist, they had separate tables, and put one another to shame; the rich partaking of their plentiful viands, and the poor having nothing to exhibit. They assembled, therefore, for other purposes besides that of receiving the memorials of Christ's redemption.

The Corinthians acted in a similar manner with respect to the exercise of their spiritual gifts; and this led the apostle to introduce his beautiful and striking comparison of the church to the human body:—"For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased

nim. And if they were all one member, where were the body ? But now are they many members, yet but one body. And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of thee ; nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary : and those members of the body which we think to be less honourable, upon these we bestow more abundant honour ; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. For our comely parts have no need : but God hath tempered the body together, having given more abundant honour to the part which lacked : that there should be no schism in the body ; but that the members should have the same care one for another. And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it ; or one member be honoured, all the members rejoice with it. Now ye are the body of Christ, and members in particular." 1 Cor. xii, 13-27.

Such is the view which the Holy Spirit has given of the nature and evil of schism among Christians. The Corinthians, who are charged with this sin, were originally heathen idolaters, who were turned to God by the preaching of the gospel ; and having believed in Christ, they were united together in Christian fellowship,

in order to their usefulness, and the increase of their piety. They were highly favoured with regard to the ministry of the word, having enjoyed the labours of St. Paul and St. Peter, with those of the fervent, eloquent, and learned Apollos, who was "mighty in the Scriptures." Instead of regarding the Lord Jesus as the author of all spiritual good, and ministers as mere instruments employed by him, they ranged themselves under these teachers, as their masters, and expressed an exclusive preference for those whom they the most admired, to the criminal disparagement of the rest. The spirit of faction, instead of brotherly love, became their distinguishing character. It led them to profane the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, and to abuse those spiritual gifts which were conferred upon them, as a means of their mutual edification, and of the furtherance of the work of God in their voluptuous and heathen city.

Yet there was no formal separation from their community. They still all met together in "one place;" though they greatly dishonoured their Lord, and their own Christian profession, by their irreverent and uncharitable conduct when thus assembled, and surrounding the sacred table. The members and organs of their

religious body that refused to perform their several functions, for the benefit of the whole, were not amputated, but inactive and useless. The foot would take no step, because it was not a hand ; and the ear would admit no sound, because it was not an eye ; absurdly forgetting that the foot and the ear are as necessary to a complete body as the eye and the hand. Those who had received spiritual gifts sometimes refused to exercise them, because the gifts themselves were not of a different kind, which they would have preferred. The body, as a whole, retained all its parts ; but it was not at unity with itself. The members had lost their sympathy with each other ; so that their harmonious and instinctive co-operation was at an end. When one Christian suffered, the others were indifferent, and forbore to weep. When another was exalted, the rest neither cherished nor expressed any sympathetic gratification. This was their schism. Their love had “ waxed cold,” and was superseded by selfishness, jealousy, and pride. Their affections were alienated from each other ; so that they were no longer, like the mother church at Jerusalem, “ of one heart, and of one soul.”

No man has written on this subject with greater candour and moderation than Dr.

George Campbell, who thus expresses himself: “It is not barely to a declared difference in judgment, that even the metaphorical use of the word” (schism) “is confined. As *breach* or *rupture* is the literal import of it in our language, wherever these words may be figuratively applied, the term *σχίσμα* seems likewise capable of an application. It invariably presupposes that among those things whereof it is affirmed, there subsisted a union formerly, and as invariably denotes that the union subsists no longer. In this manner the apostle Paul uses the word, applying it to a particular church or congregation. Thus he adjures the Corinthians by the name of the Lord Jesus, that there be no divisions or schisms among them, (1 Cor. i, 10,) *ἵνα μὴ ἦ ἐν ὑμῖν σχίσματα*: and in another place of the same Epistle, (1 Cor. xi, 18,) he tells them, ‘I hear that there are divisions’ or schisms ‘among you,’ *ἀκρω σχίσματα ἐν ὑμῖν ὑπάρχειν*. In order to obtain a proper idea of what is meant by a breach or schism in this application, we must form a just notion of that which constituted the union whereof schism was a violation. Now the great and powerful cement which united the souls of Christians was their mutual love. ‘Their hearts,’ in the emphatical language of holy writ, ‘were knit



together in love,' Col. ii, 2. This had been declared by their Master to be the distinguishing badge of their profession. 'By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,' John xiii, 35. Their partaking of the same baptism, their professing the same faith, their enjoying the same promises, and their joining in the same religious service, formed a connection merely external, and of little significance, unless, agreeably to the apostle's expression, it was 'rooted and grounded in love,' Eph. iii, 17. As this, therefore, is the great criterion of the Christian character, and the foundation of the Christian unity, whatever alienates the affections of Christians from one another is manifestly subversive of both, and may, consequently, with the greatest truth and energy, be denominated schism. It is not so much what makes an outward distinction or separation, (though this also may in a lower degree be so denominated,) as what produces an alienation of the heart, which constitutes schism in the sense of the apostle; for this strikes directly at the vitals of Christianity. Indeed, both the evil and the danger of the former, that is, an external separation, is principally to be estimated from its influence upon the latter; that is, in producing an alienation

of heart: for it is in the union of affection among Christians, that the spirit, the life, and the power of religion are principally placed.”\*

The question then arises, “Are the Wesleyan Methodists justly chargeable with schism?” using that word in its legitimate and Scriptural sense; for as to names of mere reproach, which angry men may gratuitously apply to parties whom they dislike, they are unworthy of serious regard. To answer this question, it will be necessary to notice the origin of the Wesleyan societies, and their general character in the present times. The two Wesleys, being refused the use of the churches of the Establishment, preached the word of life, with which they were intrusted, in the open air, as their great Master and his apostles had done before them. Their attention was first directed to the most neglected of their countrymen; such as the masses of London, the colliers of Kingswood and Staffordshire, the miners of Cornwall, the keelmen of Newcastle, the manufacturers of Yorkshire and Lancashire, and the peasantry in the farming districts. Take any one of these classes; the Kingswood colliers, for example. These poor men were as incapable of schism as they were of comprehending Sir Isaac New-

\* Preliminary Dissertations, diss. ix, part iii.

ton's philosophy, Were they possessed of a vital faith in Christ ? Were they one with him, and with each other, as he is one with the Father ? Were they fit companions of the holy angels ? Were they prepared to dwell with the Son of God, and to " behold his glory ?" Did the Wesleys, by their preaching to the Kingswood colliers, inspire a holy and happy people with a spirit of faction and selfishness ? Did they alienate devout Christians from one another, and dispose them to strife and contention ? No sane man will have the hardihood to venture such an assertion. In the Kingswood colliers the Wesleys found an ignorant, ungodly, and brutally-wicked people. They were no more spiritual men than they were archangels. As to Christianity, they understood not its doctrines ; they enjoyed not its salvation and happiness ; they attended not its ordinances ; they practised not its morality ; they neither comprehended nor cherished its hopes. Drunkenness, profane swearing, sabbath-breaking, forgetfulness of God and eternity : these were their characteristics ; and they were the characteristics of the people in general whom the devoted brothers succeeded in bringing to repentance, and in uniting together in religious societies, from the Land's End to the

Tweed. Was the conversion of these thousands of outcasts an act of schism? I will answer this question by another: Did our blessed Lord commission St. Paul to propagate schism, when he said, in reference to the Gentiles?—"I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among all them which are sanctified by faith that is in me," Acts xxvi, 18.

To accuse the first converts to Methodism of schism, in the sense of alienation of Christian affection, is absurd; for their hearts had never known such an affection till they became Methodists. To accuse them of schism, in the sense of separation, is equally absurd; for by their conversion they were separated from nothing but sin and their wicked companions.

But it may be asked, In what manner do these remarks apply to the present Methodist societies? Of whom are they composed? The answer is, that, with very few exceptions, they consist of the descendants of the early Methodists, who walk in the way of their fathers, and of such other persons as were previously unacquainted with religion in its life and power. Methodism has sent many a reclaimed transgres-

sor to the established Church, and many of her children have been drawn to the Dissenting meeting ; but she has received few such characters from either one body or the other. I make this statement with honest pleasure, in reference to the *non-proselyting* character of Wesleyan Methodism, as far as accessions of truly pious persons from other churches are concerned ; believing that, in this sense also, "it is more blessed to give than to receive." The Wesleyan ministry has never assumed a proselyting character. It has ever aimed at a nobler object than that of inducing devout people to adopt any particular set of opinions, or religious ceremonial. With nothing was it ever satisfied, but with the conversion of men from sin to holiness, and from mere formality to the spiritual worship of God.

The Wesleyan societies, from the time of their original formation, have been independent of the established Church, and in this sense separate ; but separation does not necessarily imply schism, considered as a sin. There may be separation without schism, and schism without separation. The church at Corinth was full of schism ; and yet its members not only came stately together, but "came together into one place." There were no secessions from the

community. In the Church of England, at the present time, there are schisms, heart-burnings, jealousies, and recriminations, which are indicative of any thing but holy love and unanimity of judgment; yet without any important separation. Both clergy and laity are ranged on different sides, in support of opposite principles, connected with the doctrines of the Oxford Tracts; and not a few of the prelates have "shaken their mitred locks" against the men of the Pusey school of theology, who practically set at defiance the whole bench of their spiritual rulers. Both in the Corinthian and in the Anglican churches, then, we have schism without separation.

Some separations are so far from being criminal, that they are commanded, and are therefore matters of absolute duty. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us," 2 Thess. iii, 6. According to this solemn adjuration, should even a minister and a majority of his people become corrupt in doctrine, and immoral in practice, the rest are bound to separate from them; otherwise they partake in the general guilt: for it is absurd to

require Christians to renounce all connection with a private individual, when he openly departs from the ways of God, and yet publicly to countenance a wicked and heretical minister, whose powers of mischief are a thousand times greater. Here is separation as a positive duty, and therefore without schism, as implying moral blame.

Large mention is made, in the Revelation of St. John, of a corrupt power, a declared object of God's righteous vengeance, denominated "Mystery, Babylon the Great, the mother of harlots, and abominations of the earth," Rev. xvii, 5. Many Protestant writers, among whom is Bishop Hurd, have proved, with all the certainty of moral demonstration, that the Church of Rome is the power here intended. She recommends and practices a systematic violation of the second commandment of the law of God; she has presumptuously perverted the holy sacrament of the Lord's supper, by withholding from the laity the cup, which is the communion of the blood of Christ; she has taken away "the key of knowledge," by opposing the general reading of the Holy Scriptures; she practically denies the sufficiency of Christ's atonement, by the pretended sacrifice of the mass; she has adopted from heathenism

the notion of a purgatory, for the accommodation of those who die in their sins, and claims for this figment a place among the truths of Christianity; she has invested the bishop of Rome, who in many instances has been a desperately wicked man, with the awful attributes of the Godhead, and sanctions his presumptuous usurpation of the prerogatives of Christ, as the head of the universal church; she has, to a great extent, superseded the mediation of Christ, by substituting that of saints and angels; her persecution of God's witnesses exceeds, in extent and cruelty, all the miseries that have been inflicted upon mankind by any other power since the world's foundation. "I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration," Rev. xvii, 6. In the prospect of her final overthrow, and of the calamities to be inflicted upon her, St. John says, "And I heard another voice from heaven, saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities." Rev. xviii, 4, 5. Here then again we have separation, as matter of duty, and as



the means of safety. The most awful maledictions of Heaven are uttered against that idolatrous and antichristian community; and all who identify themselves with her share in her guilt, and must also bear their part in her punishment, when the day of retribution comes. Some men indeed talk of "the schism of the Reformation;" but the noble band of confessors and martyrs, who by God's blessing effected that mighty moral revolution, and broke the spell which had bound the human intellect for ages, better understood the nature of their calling. A conceited skeptic like Hume, and a puny theologian like Froude, may traduce the character of the reformers; but no reproach can ever tarnish the solid glory with which their honoured names are invested. The Protestant Reformation was one of the most substantial benefits ever conferred upon mankind. With respect to Scriptural Christianity, it was life from the dead.

There are cases in which separations are made among Christians with the most perfect charity, and even for the advancement of the work of God, for which every one ought to be concerned. A Methodist chapel, for instance, is too small to accommodate the people who desire to attend; another is therefore erected

at a convenient distance ; and the congregation and society are both divided, to make room for others. These arrangements are made with the consent of all parties ; and not only without any breach of charity, but with pious gratitude. Under similar circumstances a circuit is divided, that the pastoral charge may be more efficiently executed in the several societies which it includes. Here is separation, but no schism. The divisions are not blameworthy, but commendable, and that upon the purest principles of Christian zeal and love. Upon the same ground parishes are often divided, and new churches are built, not for schismatical purposes, but for the spiritual good of the people.

In the year 1784 the Methodist societies in America were raised by Mr. Wesley into an independent church, and thus formally separated from their brethren in the British islands, as they had always been locally separated by the waters of the vast Atlantic. Since that period the two communities have been perfectly distinct in their ecclesiastical and financial arrangements. But there has been no schism in the case. The independent position of the two bodies, and the peculiarities of their discipline, have never created the slightest uneasiness, or

occasioned for a moment, in either party, the least alienation of affection. Notwithstanding the completeness of their separation, they are as much one in heart as they ever were ; so that both can sing, with equal truth and feeling,

“ Subsists as in us all one soul,  
No power can make us twain ;  
And mountains rise, and oceans roll,  
To sever us in vain !”

Other separations in the church of God are highly expedient, and it is conceived may be effected without violating the great law of Christian charity. There never has been a perfect identity of opinion among all the sincere followers of the Lord Jesus ; nor has there ever been a perfect identity in their forms of divine worship. And indeed neither is the one nor the other necessary in order to that unity of holy love for which the Saviour prayed, and which is in truth essential to the Christian character. Men of equal understanding, candour, learning, and piety have differed in their views, not of the vital truths and blessings of the gospel, (for on these subjects they have been substantially agreed,) but of church order, the precise nature of God's decrees, questions affecting the administration of baptism, and the use of forms in public worship. They have

attached so much importance to their peculiarities, as to demand a recognition of them in the public ministry of the word, and in the services of the sanctuary. If such men as Tillotson, Burnet, and Stillingfleet might be gratified in the use of a liturgy, and with episcopal government, why should not a similar concession be made to the tastes and preferences of such men as Baxter, Howe, and Bates, among the Non-conformists ; of Fuller, Hall, and Carey, among the Baptists ; and of Benson, Clarke, and Watson, among the Methodists ? They were all men of unquestionable piety, of Christian moderation, of great intellectual strength, and of sanctified erudition. And if the judgment and predilections of these eminent men were entitled to a respectful deference, why should their less gifted but equally sincere brethren be denied the same freedom ? When did our blessed Lord or his apostles ever lay the conscience of an upright man under restraint in matters that simply affected his personal salvation, and which inflicted no injury upon his neighbour, or upon the truth and ordinances of God, though the man might be even weak and erring ? Liberty of conscience is not only a common right of human nature, which no earthly power can justly take away ; but the exercise

of it is a solemn duty. Every man must bear his own burden, by giving an account of himself to God; and therefore every man must judge for himself, in matters of religious and moral obligation. No man, and no body of men, (call them "the Church," or any other name,) can answer for me in the last great day. I must be either damned, or saved, not by proxy, but in person.

If our blessed Lord had designed that there should be a nice and exact uniformity of theological opinion, of ecclesiastical order, and of divine worship, among his people throughout all ages, he would doubtless have declared his purpose, and have given the precise rule to which every one was required to conform. He has not done this; and it has not been done by the apostles, who "had the mind of Christ," and who acted by his authority. It is undeniable that differences of opinion and in modes of worship prevailed in the churches which were collected, organized, and governed by the apostles; and that these "wise master-builders" were far more intent upon edifying them in faith and love, than upon settling questions on which they might innocently differ. What a code of "Church principles" is contained in the following passage, written by the inspira-

tion of the Holy Ghost, and therefore worth more than a thousand elaborate volumes of human speculation!—"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. Who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth. Yea, he shall be holden up: for God is able to make him stand. One man esteemeth one day above another: another esteemeth every day alike. Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind. He that regardeth the day, regardeth it unto the Lord; and he that regardeth not the day, to the Lord he doth not regard it. He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks. For none of us liveth to himself, and no man dieth to himself. For whether we live, we live unto the Lord; and whether we die, we die unto the Lord; whether we live therefore, or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ both died, and rose, and revived, that he might be Lord both of the dead and living.

But why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at naught thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written, As I live, saith the Lord, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God. So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God. Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no man put a stumbling-block or an occasion to fall in his brother's way. I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean. But if thy brother be grieved with thy meat, now walkest thou not charitably. Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. Let not then your good be evil-spoken of: for the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. For he that in these things serveth Christ is acceptable to God, and approved of men. Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another. For meat destroy not the work of God." Rom. xiv, 1-20. What language, what sentiments are these! and addressed too to the Church of Rome! Blessed apostle! where shall we find,

among all the men who loudly proclaim themselves thy "successors," the same principles and temper? The persons here referred to were mistaken. They weakly regarded as matters of sacred duty things that were in themselves indifferent. But they were upright and conscientious men, the redeemed and sanctified servants of Christ, and accepted by him. St. Paul, therefore, would neither coerce them himself, nor suffer others to treat them with harshness, or to correct their mistakes in an authoritative manner.

The same principles are distinctly recognised in other parts of the New Testament. When St. Paul, at an advanced period of his ministerial life, came to Jerusalem, it was said to him, "Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are which believe; and they are all zealous of the law," Acts xxi, 20. These men were Christians, for they believed in Jesus; yet they worshipped God in the use of Jewish rites, and manifested great zeal in the practice of these peculiarities, although, in point of fact, they were abrogated by God. Having been habituated to the Mosaic forms of worship from their earliest days, they would have been greatly distressed in their consciences, had they been peremptorily required to lay them aside;



although they had doubtless, in common with all their Gentile brethren, practically received the doctrine of justification by faith only; for this was a capital point in Christianity. No flesh could be justified by works of law, either moral or ceremonial.

While the Jewish believers were tolerated in the use of the Mosaic rites, it was acknowledged by all the apostles, that those rites should not be imposed upon the Gentile converts; and St. Paul strenuously defended them in the enjoyment of "the liberty wherewith Christ had made them free." The Christians therefore at Antioch, at Philippi, at Ephesus, at Rome, all worshipped God acceptably, but in a manner very different from that in which their brethren of Abraham's race worshipped him. They presented to God "spiritual sacrifices," but none of those tangible offerings which were required by the Levitical code. Now had it pleased God, in his providence, that any considerable number of Gentile believers should become resident at Jerusalem, it is obvious that they could not have joined in the forms of worship which were practised there; for they had not received the rite of circumcision, and were forbidden to receive it. They must, therefore, have had their separate religious assemblies,

which they might have held without any violation of mutual love, and consequently without schism. And would the apostles, who were the spiritual fathers of all these converted people, have confined their ministry either to the Jewish or the Gentile congregations? Nay, verily. It was a decided case, that “there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free; but Christ is all, and in all,” Col. iii, 11. The diversified gifts and qualifications of ministers are the common property of the church. “Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas; all are yours; and ye are Christ’s; and Christ is God’s,” 1 Cor. iii, 22, 23. As these apostolic men successively ministered in these Jewish and Gentile assemblies, would they not have said, with a full conviction that their admonitions were practicable?—“Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, long-suffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye. And above all these things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also ye are

called in one body ; and be ye thankful." Col. iii, 12-15.

The hinderance to a perfect union in religious worship, between the Jews and the Gentiles who believed, did not arise from any thing in Christianity ; but from the habits and prejudices of one of the parties : yet as those habits and prejudices were connected with a conscientious feeling of duty in men whom God accepted, the apostles would not interpose an absolute authority to remove the difficulty. They were alive to the true unity of the church, as was their adorable Master ; but they knew that this unity does not consist in external uniformity, but in the exercise of heavenly affections, arising from a vital union with Christ, and a substantial agreement in the great truths of his gospel.

That there is much schism in England at this day, no one can doubt ; but the guilt of it does not lie at the door of the men of peace and love, to whatever denomination they may belong ; but of those intolerant spirits who cannot bear that any one should differ from them. Some of the loudest declaimers against schism are men who bear the brand of that sin on their foreheads, where every one sees it but themselves. There are writers against schism,

whose periodical lucubrations savour of nothing but “envy, hatred, and malice, and all uncharitableness.” As well might one expect to hear the language of devout prayer from the lips of a blaspheming infidel, as to find a burst of catholic love, or even the slightest indication of generous feeling, in the unholy pages of these angry and spiteful revilers. It is not by these men that the divisions of the church can be healed. Satan is not cast out by Satan.

“The meek, the still, the lowly mind,  
O may I learn from thee, my God,  
And love, with softest pity join’d,  
For those that trample on thy blood.”

Among spiritual Christians, the men of faith and charity, there is not only that unity of heart and mind for which the Lord Jesus prayed, but also an external unity of an edifying and striking nature, which all may witness. Though worshipping apart, living under different forms of church government, and entertaining certain peculiarities of opinion, they worship the same God, they confide in the same Mediator, they are quickened and sanctified by the same Spirit. They enjoy the same salvation, they believe the same truth, they use the same sacraments, they cherish the same hope of eternal life, as the gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Hence the apostolic admonition, "I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all." Eph. iv, 1-6. In the things which are here specified by the apostle there is an undeniable unity in all sound-hearted Churchmen, Dissenters, and Methodists. The real authors of schism among them all are the men of pride and anger, who have neither "lowliness" nor "meekness," "long-suffering" nor "love;" who know nothing of "forbearing one another;" who acknowledge no "unity," but that of having their own way; and to whom "peace" is an intolerable grievance.

Let no one suppose, because I maintain that there may be not only separation from a corrupt church, without schism, but also innocent separations among real Christians, the spiritual worshippers of God, that I therefore plead for all the separations that have ever taken place

among persons bearing the Christian name. God forbid ! I plead for Christian liberty, as it is distinctly recognised in the New Testament ; not for faction, not for the enemies of Christian order, much less for direct ungodliness. There were persons who disturbed the hallowed quiet of the apostolical churches, and whose conduct is branded with the condemnation of the Holy Spirit ; but they were a very different people from those whom the Wesleys united together for the purpose of fleeing from the wrath to come, and of working out their own salvation. “ Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly ; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.” Rom. xvi, 17, 18. The Wesleys and their fellow-labourers brought in no “ doctrines ” contrary to apostolic teaching, and the general consent of orthodox churches. They made use of no “ good words and fair speeches,” to “ deceive ” any man ; but by a faithful “ manifestation of the truth,” contained in Holy Scripture, appealed to the consciences of all the ignorant and wicked people to whom they could gain access ; bearing testimony

against sin in all its forms, calling all men to repentance, and declaring everywhere, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nor did they "serve their own belly," but gave up reputation, ease, friends, prospects of worldly advancement, and all that men in general hold dear, that they might "serve our Lord Jesus Christ," in the actual salvation of the souls which he had redeemed by his blood.

The Holy Ghost, by St. Jude, has also spoken in terms of strong condemnation of separatists of the same class:—"But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ; how that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit." Jude 17-19. Were the Wesleys and their spiritual children "mockers?" Were they "sensual" men? Did they "walk after their own ungodly lusts?" Could it be said of them, that they "had not the Spirit?" Let their works answer these questions. The fact is, theirs was not a separation from a spiritual people, but from the ungodly multitude of baptized heathens, and was an act of obedience to the divine command:

“ Wherefore come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing ; and I will receive you, and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty,”  
2 Cor. vi, 17, 18.

After all, there are persons who, in the teēth of Scripture and reason, will identify every kind of separation with schism, and persist in calling upon the Wesleyan Methodists' to dissolve their societies, and become strict Church people, that they may escape this fearful charge. I will therefore take the liberty of reminding such persons of a very obvious fact; but one at which they seem unwilling to look. If separation be schism, and schism in every form be a sin, then every Christian under heaven is a schismatic ; for every man is separated, in one degree or another, from immense bodies of professed Christians, members of the visible church of Christ. Should I, for instance, become a strict Churchman, I necessarily separate myself from my Wesleyan brethren, whom I know to be the people of God. I should also be separated from every other Protestant church, as well as from that of Papal Rome. If I connect myself with the Romish Church, I am no better. In this case I may call myself a Cath-



olic, as a maniac calls himself a king; but I am unavoidably a separatist from the whole of Protestant Christendom, as well as from the Greek Church. If I resolve to connect myself with no one body of Christians, and profess a union with them all, I only deceive myself; for I am still a separatist. My union with the universal church is merely ideal. I receive no sacrament, join in no public worship, and am an outcast from the great Christian family. If, therefore, separation be necessarily schism, and schism in every case be sin, a sinner in that sense I must live and die, whether I will or not.

Still, however, my case, though hard, is not peculiar. The clergyman who presses me to tear myself away from the friends of my heart, is himself a separatist; and so are the writers of the tracts against Methodism, which many of the clergy are now distributing with both hands. Nay, ours is a common lot. The entire body of the English clergy are separatists; including the right reverend prelates, and even the archbishops of York and Canterbury. They are, by their formularies and position, further separated from the Church of Scotland, and from the Lutheran and Reformed Churches of the continent, than I am from them. With whatever severity they may utter their censures

against me, the fact is undeniable,—we are all brethren in separation.

The conclusion, then, to which I am led is this:—If I leave the Wesleyan Methodists, I have no hope of improving my means and opportunities of either receiving or doing good; I am deprived of many spiritual advantages which I now enjoy; and in a world like this, so full of evil, I cannot safely part with any religious help. As to the charge of separation, wherever I may turn I cannot escape from that. Under these circumstances, I will live and die among my own people; yet endeavouring, as much as lieth in me, to live peaceably with all men; and never ceasing to pray, in the spirit of Christian charity, for “all them that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and mine.” While I am assured, upon Scriptural grounds, of my filial relation to God, I cannot doubt that I am a member of the happy brotherhood whom the great Father owns as his children. Separated we may be, in various ways; yet,

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

## CHAPTER IV.

*I am perfectly satisfied with the validity of the Wesleyan ministrations, and with the church character which the Wesleyan societies have assumed.*

THE boldest objection ever made against the Wesleyan body, and, indeed, against all classes of Christians who are not episcopalians, is, that they have among themselves no valid administration, either of divine truth, or of the sacraments; that they are, in fact, out of the pale of God's church, and have no Scriptural warrant to expect any spiritual blessing in the religious services which they frequent. Nay, those very services, it is declared, are in themselves sinful, and as offensive to God as was the worship of the ancient Samaritans, which consisted of a profane admixture of holy and idolatrous rites. The clergy of the established Church, it is peremptorily affirmed, are the only true ministers of Christ in this land; and their ministrations are the only channels through which God has pledged himself by covenant to convey his grace to men. The ground of this claim in behalf of the clergy is, that they have received their appointment to the sacred office from bishops, as a distinct order, and in a direct line of succession from the apostles of the Lord.

Almighty God, it is said, has ordained three distinct orders of ministers in his church, bishops, priests, and deacons ; no ordination of any man to the Christian ministry is valid, unless it be performed by a bishop ; and it is only by the preaching of the men who are thus ordained, and especially by the sacraments which they dispense, that the benefits of Christ's mediation are applied in the actual salvation of men. Such is the claim which is urged by many modern writers, with the most absolute confidence, as if it were liable to no exception.

If this claim be just, it is not too much to say, that millions of the holiest and most useful men that ever lived have been in fatal error ; that a large proportion of those " which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished ;" and that, not through unbelief, or any other form of intentional wickedness, but inadvertency. Let the appeal then be made to the only rule and standard of truth, the inspired word of God. " Holy Scripture containeth all things necessary to salvation : so that whatsoever is not read therein, nor may be proved thereby, is not to be required of any man, that it should be believed as an article of faith, or be thought requisite or necessary to salvation."\*

\* Sixth article of the Church of England.

We find, on examination, that the doctrine of the "apostolic succession," as it is usually called, (that is, of an uninterrupted succession of bishops, as a distinct and peculiar order, from the apostolic times to the present day,) rests upon a series of assumptions, which no man can prove; and that, in its practical bearings, it contradicts some of the plainest declarations of holy writ. Momentous as are the consequences which are made to depend upon this doctrine, it is a mere figment of Papal Rome, which her priesthood has employed to overawe the simple, and of which learned men have sometimes made themselves the willing dupes.

1. The divine right of episcopacy, as a distinct order, has never yet been proved. All that has appeared on that side of the argument is at most elaborate deduction, so far as Holy Scripture is concerned: what is alleged as proof is not direct and explicit. On the other hand, it is undeniable that, in the New Testament, the terms elder, (or presbyter,) and bishop, are indifferently applied to the same persons. Take the following examples:—"And from Miletus he" (Paul) "sent to Ephesus, and called the elders" (*τοὺς πρεσβυτέρους*, the presbyters) "of the church," Acts xx, 17.

In his address to these men he said, "Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers," (*ἐπισκόπους*, bishops,) "to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood," verse 28. Here we have episcopacy, and that by divine right; for the men were made bishops by "the Holy Ghost." But were they bishops of ministers? This is not said: but it is distinctly asserted that they were bishops of the people. "The flock," "the church of God," were their charge.—Had each of them a diocess? Neither is this in the record; but the contrary is implied; for they were all summoned from "Ephesus," as belonging to "the church" there. These primitive bishops were familiarly known as presbyters, and are called expressly by that name in the inspired narrative.

Language precisely similar is used by St. Peter, who thus speaks in the name of his Lord to his fellow-labourers in the gospel: "The elders" (*πρεσβυτέρους*, presbyters) "which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder," (*συμπρεσβύτερος*, co-presbyter,) "and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed; feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the

oversight thereof," (*ἐπισκοποῦντες*, acting as bishops,) "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, 1-3. Here again presbyters are exhorted to fulfil their episcopal duties; and the objects of their charge are described to be not ministers, but "the flock of God." If presbyters and bishops had really belonged to orders essentially distinct, and had the salvation of mankind throughout all succeeding ages been made to hinge upon that distinction, as many zealous moderns teach; it is inconceivable that the Holy Spirit should thus confound them together. So little did the sanctified apostle affect titles of dignity, that he even calls himself a fellow-presbyter, placing himself on a level with the humblest of his brethren.

Precisely the same view of the episcopal office is given by St. Paul, when writing to Titus on the subject of ministerial qualifications. "For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders" (*πρεσβυτέρους*, presbyters) "in every city, as I had appointed thee: if any be blameless, the husband of one wife, having faithful children, not accused of

riot, or unruly. For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God." Titus i, 5-7 The apostle here unquestionably assumes the equality of presbyters and bishops ; or, rather, the identity of their office and work. A presbyter must have certain qualifications, because his office, which is that of a bishop, absolutely requires them. This is St. Paul's argument. And these presbyter-bishops were not each of them to be placed over other ministers through a wide extent of country. They were to be ordained "in every city" throughout the island.

In his Epistle to the Philippians the apostle makes no mention of the presbyters by that name, but addresses "the saints, . . . with the bishops and deacons," ch. i, 1. Hence Mr. Wesley's note on that verse : "The former," the bishops, "properly took care of the internal state ; the latter," the deacons, "of the externals of the church, 1 Tim. iii, 2-8 ; although these were not wholly to be confined to the one, neither those to the other. The word bishops here includes all the presbyters at Philippi, as well as the ruling presbyters ; the names bishop and presbyter, or elder, being promiscuously used in the first ages."

There is no passage in the New Testament



that teaches a contrary doctrine. The attempt to find bishops, in the modern sense of the word, in the twelve apostles, and presbyters in the seventy disciples, is a hopeless task. The apostles were the divinely-appointed witnesses of our Saviour's resurrection. They were also inspired men; and, as such, were endued with miraculous powers. Their word was Christian law, and will be till the end of time. Even the clergy of the Pusey school deny to their own bishops these sacred and high prerogatives. They do not hesitate to controvert the solemn and official charges of their diocesans; whereas the decision of an apostle was never contradicted, except by a heretic or an unbeliever. It is not in practice, but only in theory and in controversy, that bishops are regarded as sustaining the apostolic office.

Some writers have imagined that they found bishops, as a distinct order, in the angels of the seven churches of Asia, mentioned in the Revelation of St. John; but they have undeniably failed in the attempt at proof. If it be even granted that those "angels" were individual men, the representatives of their respective churches, including the entire pastorate; it does not follow that they were any more than

first ministers among equals ; placed first, not by a distinct ordination, as belonging to a superior order, but by general consent, on account of their age, or the peculiarity of their endowments. That they were raised above their brother pastors by a third ordination, and that they possessed the exclusive right to ordain others to the ministry, there is not the slightest evidence. Argument entirely fails. All is assumption and conjecture.

It has been asserted that Timothy and Titus were bishops, superior in order to presbyters ; and that each of them had a distinct diocess ; but assertion is not proof. St. Paul left Timothy at Ephesus, and Titus at Crete, that they might regulate the affairs of the churches in those places ; but no intimation is given that they were intended to remain there. Titus, as we have seen, was to ordain presbyters, having the qualifications of bishops ; but in the instructions which were given to Timothy, no mention is made of the ordination of presbyters ; but only of bishops and deacons : a strong intimation, that presbyters and bishops were one order ; so that in appointing bishops, Timothy would appoint presbyters, who would at once teach and govern the people. Timothy and Titus are themselves never called bishops ;

perhaps because they had no distinct pastoral charge. It would seem that they were itinerant evangelists, employed under the direction of St. Paul. That Timothy did not continue permanently to reside in Ephesus is certain ; for during St. Paul's last imprisonment in Rome, he says to him, "Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me ;" and, "come before winter," 2 Tim. iv, 9, 21.

Do we then object to the episcopal form of government, as antisciptural and unlawful ? Not at all. It is connected with several advantages, and is one, among other forms of church order, upon which the divine blessing has manifestly rested, when exercised by spiritual men, and for spiritual purposes. The principle of superintendence over ministers, and of subordination among them, is recognised in Holy Scripture, and is liable in itself to no just exception. The same principle is exemplified in the whole of the Wesleyan discipline, so far as the ministry is concerned. What we object to is, the revolting assumption that episcopacy, as a distinct order, was expressly instituted by God ; that it is therefore universally binding upon the church ; that it is essential to the valid exercise of the Christian ministry ; and that, in fact, the salvation of mankind is made to depend

upon it: which must be the case, if those churches that have not such an episcopacy have neither the sacraments nor any of the other ordinances of Christ. In these lofty and repulsive views Mr. Wesley was trained; and he tenaciously acted upon them in early life; but when he "became a man" in knowledge and experience, he adopted other principles, more just and catholic. "Yet," said he, "I still believe the episcopal form of church government to be Scriptural and apostolical: I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the apostles. But that it is prescribed in Scripture I do not believe. This opinion, which I once zealously espoused, I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Bishop Stillingfleet's 'Irenicon.' I think he has unanswerably proved that neither Christ nor his apostles prescribe any particular form of church government; and that the plea of divine right for diocesan episcopacy was never heard of in the primitive church."\* He therefore declared, that although he had only been ordained as a presbyter, he had as much right to ordain others, as he had to administer the sacraments.

If this is a just view of the subject, then the doctrine against which we contend entirely

\* Works, vol. vii, p. 284.

fails. If it could even be demonstrated that bishops, as a distinct and peculiar order, essentially superior to presbyters, have existed in the church from the earliest ages, unless it can be also shown that they were appointed *as such* by the apostles of our Lord, there is manifestly no proof of an "*apostolical* succession" of this kind. The apostles cannot be honestly connected with matters in which they had no concern. If they really did appoint bishops, of the order in question, let the record of such appointment be produced. The "doctrines and commandments of men" are not binding upon the consciences of Christ's people; who may have his ordinances, his presence, and his blessing without them. But,

2. An uninterrupted succession of bishops as a distinct and peculiar order is absolutely incapable of proof. It is not denied that the Christian ministry has been perpetuated from the apostolic times, without interruption. Of this fact direct historical evidence exists; and it is in full accordance with the promise of Christ, "I am with you always, even unto the end of the world," Matt. xxviii, 20. Nor is it denied that from the apostolic times ministers have existed to whom the name of bishop has been applied. As an historical fact, this also

is fully ascertained. But the question is, In what sense has that name been used? If in later ages of the church it has been employed to designate a class of ministers superior in order to presbyters; was it from the beginning, and in every instance, used in this sense? Have all the men who have been successively called bishops had three distinct and separate ordinations,—first as deacons; then as presbyters; and lastly, as bishops? and if so, what was the form of ordination to the office of a bishop, as distinct from the form of ordination used in the appointment of deacons and presbyters, in the earliest age of the Christian church? The order in which the early bishops of Rome were raised to that honour is matter of uncertainty, the writers who were the most likely to be correctly informed, positively contradicting each other. But if the exact dates of their several appointments could be given, we are no nearer a settlement of the question. It is still asked, By whom were they appointed? and in what manner? Was each of them ordained thrice? or were some of them ordained mere presbyter-bishops, such as Titus was directed to appoint in Crete? If a third ordination was given to them when they were made bishops, by whose authority was that rite intro-

duced? Unless direct and unequivocal proof can be adduced on all these points, the matter is still left in uncertainty; and the highest pretender to apostolic authority, through a succession of bishops as a distinct order, is in no better plight than his brother who has had a presbyterian appointment to the sacred ministry. Unless the episcopalian boaster of such a succession can vouch for the regularity of every ordination that has taken place in his entire line, not from a pope, or a bishop of Rome, but from one of the apostles, he may speak in an elevated tone of voice, use many hard words, be very warm and very positive; but he can no more substantiate his claim, than he can control the motions of the heavenly bodies. His theory is an assumption upon the designs of God,—an assumption upon apostolic acts,—an assumption upon the facts of history;

“ As when a wandering fire,  
 Compact of unctious vapour, which the night  
 Condenses, and the cold environs round,  
 Kindled through agitation to a flame,  
 Which oft, they say, some evil spirit attends,  
 Hovering and blazing with delusive light,  
 Misleads the amazed night-wanderer from his way  
 To bogs and mires, and oft through pond or pool;  
 There swallow'd up and lost, from succour far.”

Mr. Wesley spoke advisedly, and with a full

understanding of the subject in all its bearings, when he said, "The uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove:" meaning an uninterrupted succession of bishops, as a distinct and peculiar order, from the apostles; for this is the true question.

Archbishop Whately has also remarked with a candour which does him honour, "There is not a minister in all Christendom who is able to trace up with any approach to certainty his own spiritual pedigree. The sacramental virtue (for such it is, that is implied, whether the term be used or not, in the principle I have been speaking of) dependant on the imposition of hands, with the due observance of apostolical usages, by a bishop himself duly consecrated, after having been in like manner baptized into the church, and ordained deacon and priest, this sacramental virtue, if a single link of the chain be faulty, must, on the above principles, be utterly nullified ever after, in respect of all the links that hang on that one. For if a bishop has not been duly consecrated, or had not been, previously, rightly ordained, his ordinations are null; and so are the ministrations of those ordained by him; and their ordination of others; (supposing any of the persons or-



dained by him to attain to the episcopal office ;) and so on, without end. The poisonous taint of informality, if it once creep in undetected, will spread the infection of nullity to an indefinite and irremediable extent.

“ And who can undertake to pronounce, that during that long period usually designated as the dark ages, no such taint ever was introduced? Irregularities could not have been wholly excluded without a perpetual miracle; and that no such miraculous interference existed, we have even historical proof. Amidst the numerous corruptions of doctrine and of practice, and gross superstitions, that crept in, during those ages, we find recorded descriptions not only of the profound ignorance and profligacy of life of many of the clergy, but also of the grossest irregularities in respect of discipline and form. We read of bishops consecrated when mere children; of men officiating who barely knew their letters; of prelates expelled, and others put into their places, by violence; of illiterate and profligate laymen, and habitual drunkards, admitted to holy orders; and, in short, of the prevalence of every kind of disorder, and reckless disregard of the decency which the apostle enjoins. It is inconceivable that any one, even moderately ac-

quainted with history, can feel a certainty, or any approach to a certainty, that, amidst all this confusion and corruption, every requisite form was, in every instance, strictly adhered to, by men, many of them openly profane and secular, unrestrained by public opinion, through the gross ignorance of the population among whom they lived; and that no one not duly consecrated or ordained was admitted to sacred offices.”\*

That Almighty God, the Father of mercies, whose eye at one glance sees all events from the beginning to the end of time, would have made the salvation of millions of mankind—and these, too, the members of his church, comprehending the holiest and best of their race—dependant upon contingencies like these, arising out of matters of mere form, is of all incredible things the most incredible! But,

3. Could the fact of an uninterrupted succession of bishops, as a distinct order superior to presbyters, be satisfactorily traced, and the regularity of every ordination clearly proved, still the doctrine against which we contend could not be maintained; because it is at variance with the general tenor of Holy Scripture. It is asserted, that if a man be in the “succes-

\* Kingdom of Christ, pp. 176-178.

sion," he is a true minister of Christ, and a supernatural efficacy attends his ministrations, particularly with respect to the sacraments; but if a man be not in this "succession," whatever qualifications and authority he may otherwise possess, should he preach the gospel, and administer baptism and the Lord's supper, he is an intruder into the sacred office, his services are a profanation of holy things, and are unblest to the people who join in them. Personal character, it is alleged, does not alter the case on either side.

If this doctrine be true, the Lord Jesus affords his direct sanction to the ministrations of bad men, whatever errors they may teach, and whatever may be the enormity of their crimes. Can any man reconcile this revolting principle with the solemn and express declarations of God's own word? Christianity is eminently a holy religion. It calls upon all men, everywhere, to repent, and do works meet for repentance. The sacrament by which men are introduced into the church, teaches them, most impressively, that, from the very beginning of their Christian course, they are to cleanse themselves from all moral filthiness, and walk in newness of life. Every one that names the name of Christ is to depart from iniquity, and deny him-

self of all ungodliness and worldly lusts : he is to live soberly, righteously, and godly, in all good conscience before God and man. Indeed, "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." The Christian ministry is the most sacred and responsible of all the offices that either man or angel can sustain ; and yet men have the audacity, in effect, to declare that the valid exercise of its functions is consistent with every form of impiety and wickedness ! Such is the liberty that is presumptuously taken with the character of Christ, as the head of the church. Without any authority from his word, he is daringly pledged to approve and bless the acts of men, against whom he has uttered the most awful denunciations of his vengeance ! That he may occasionally overrule for good the ministrations of wicked men, is conceded ; as he sometimes makes the foulest crimes subservient to his own glory ; but it is impossible that such ministrations should have his sanction.

But we are not left to bare inference upon this momentous subject. The Bible speaks upon it in language which all can understand. "Unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do that thou shouldst take my covenant into thy mouth, seeing thou hatest instruction, and castest my words behind thee ?" Psa. 1, 16, 17

“Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matt. vii, 15, 16, 20. Here private persons are admonished by our blessed Lord to stand aloof from those men who undertake to guide others in the way to heaven, while they themselves are walking in the way to hell. He makes no exception in favour of those who are in the “episcopal succession.” Could he have given such a warning, if he had pledged himself to bless the ministrations of these men to the people? If the grand test of a man’s ministerial authority be the nature of his ordination, as episcopal or otherwise, how could our Lord direct the people to judge of it by personal conduct? To all workers of iniquity he says, “Ye are of your father the devil.” This is their true “succession.” Whatever men may say concerning them, his decision is, “I never knew you.”

Now, what have been the “fruits” of a large number of the men who are said to have been the “successors of the apostles,” and the divinely-appointed channel through which the true ministerial character and authority have

been conveyed to the men who are alleged at present to possess them? History is too faithful a record of their misdoings. The details are too shocking for recital here. They may be found in the writings of authors of unimpeachable veracity. The men of whom we speak have practised the worst vices and crimes that ever dishonoured human nature; and such as, in a well-regulated state of society, would have been visited with capital punishment. Many of them were steeped in sensuality and spiritual wickedness; others spread desolation through extensive districts, and with a fiend-like avidity shed the blood of saints like water. And did these men claim to be the true ministers of the Lord Jesus? They did; and I blush to add, some English Protestants vindicate their claim, and loudly boast that they are themselves in the same "succession!" The most awful part of the subject is, that these monsters in the human shape are declared to have been the representatives of the apostles, who were the chosen and sanctified witnesses of Christ! But these holy men in their writings repudiate the revolting connection. The Romish apostacy is a prominent subject of prophecy in the Epistles of St. Paul, 2 Thess. ii, 1-12; 1 Tim. iv, 1-4; and is held up as a warning to the Chris-

tian church in every age: so far was that blessed apostle from connecting himself with the Papal episcopate. Mystic Babylon is declared to have become "the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird." "Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine; and she shall be utterly burned with fire: for strong is the Lord God who judgeth her," Rev. xviii, 2, 8. Whatever affinity with her certain ecclesiastics may claim, the omniscient Spirit proclaims her overthrow as an occasion of pious joy, saying, in reference to that event, "Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy APOSTLES and prophets; for God hath avenged you on her," Rev. xviii, 20. Erring men hold her up to the public confidence: apostles and prophets exult in her ruin.

A wicked person, whatever order men may assign to him in the church, cannot be a true minister of Christ; for Christ disowns him both in this world and the next. And what a man does not himself possess, he cannot convey to another. Whatever may be said in favour of the more decent and moral of the Romish prelates, there is nothing in the New Testament to justify any man in claiming for the body of them the character of true servants of Christ,

in any respect. Many of them might perform ecclesiastical acts ; but there is no promise of Christ, securing the communication of spiritual benefits through their profane ministrations. The case of Judas has often been referred to, as directing to a different conclusion, but generally without due consideration. Mr. Charles Wesley, for example, apologizing for the official acts of ungodly clergymen, says,

“ Even Judas fill'd an apostolic chair.”

But this is a mistake. Not one of the apostles strictly speaking, entered upon the full duties of his office till the day of Pentecost ; for not until then did they receive the requisite qualifications for their work. Up to that period they were in a course of training for their allotted service ; but they performed not apostolical acts, nor did they, indeed, understand the true nature of Christianity, till the promised gift of the Holy Spirit came upon them. Before that time Judas had forfeited his call, and was “ gone to his own place.” He “ fell from” his office “ by transgression,” as does every ecclesiastic who acts in a similar manner ; for a wicked minister of Christ's holy religion is a palpable contradiction in terms. Those who countenance such a man make themselves partakers



of his evil deeds ; and to pledge the Lord Jesus to bless and sanction such ministrations, is to make him the minister of sin. If Romanists will boast of their own priesthood, in every period of its scandalous history, in the name of all that is sacred, let not Protestants make themselves responsible for its idolatries, murders, and other abominations. There have been periods at which

“Its crimes were such as Sodom never knew.”

Capital error, as well as immoral conduct, is inconsistent with the ministerial character, in whatever “succession” the offender may be placed. “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son. 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.” 2 John 9-11. Hence it appears that the people of God are carefully to examine the doctrine, as well as the moral character, of their teachers, and that as matter of solemn duty.

It is the prerogative of God to qualify men for the Christian ministry, and then call them

to its holy and responsible duties. The Church of England therefore properly directs that this question shall be proposed to every one who applies for ordination: "Dost thou trust that thou art inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon thee this office and ministry?" If he be actuated solely by selfish and worldly motives, so as to deceive his own soul in this weighty matter, or if he obtain ordination by the utterance of a known falsehood, no external ceremony can make him a true minister of the Lord Jesus. He is an intruder to the day of his death, unless he repent of his sin, and then receive a commission from above. Those whom God calls to this work, he qualifies, by deep piety, and by requisite gifts. He then draws them by strong, and often involuntary, inclination, and by a conscientious feeling of duty. "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, wo is unto me, if I preach not the gospel."

A minister of Christ is to declare "the whole counsel of God," as contained in the evangelical revelation: he must therefore understand it, and be "apt to teach." His work is connected with the honour of Christ: he must therefore have a burning zeal for his Master's glory. The design of all his ministrations is, to convert and save the souls of the people:

hence he must love them with a passion like that of his Saviour ; and travail in birth for them, till they are made new creatures. His is not a mere "profession," but a sacred vocation ; and therefore his conduct must be blameless, as a living sermon. He is to govern and "take care of the church of God : " he must therefore be no novice, but a man of understanding and experience. His work demands his undivided attention ; and he must give himself wholly to it ; being "separated" from the engagements and cares of worldly business. "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word," Acts vi, 4.

The manner in which a man thus qualified and called of God is to be actually appointed to his office, is left very much at large in the Holy Scriptures. That he can only be validly ordained by a bishop, occupying a rank superior to that of a mere presbyter, we do not read in the inspired book. But we do learn, that, in the ordinary course of things, he should be solemnly "set apart to his work," as a man eminently and especially belonging to God, with the concurrence of the people to whom he is to preach the word of life, by one or more ministers of Christ, and that with fasting and prayer. Acts xiii, 3. "The things that thou

hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also," 2 Tim. ii, 2. This is the rule. The ordination of unfaithful men, who neither know the gospel, nor are able to teach it, is an unauthorized act, by whomsoever performed. Whatever hands may have been laid upon the head of a "false prophet," and whatever credentials he may have in his pocket, the people to whom he comes, judging by his "fruits," are commanded to "beware of" him. He assumes the office of a pastor ; but the chief Shepherd has not been concerned in his appointment, nor will he sanction him in his charge.

With these facts before me, I confess that I contemplate, with satisfaction and gratitude, the ministry which I enjoy as a Wesleyan Methodist. Its orthodoxy is unimpeachable ; and every precaution is used, that none shall be admitted into it but men of piety and of competent abilities. Every year the personal character of each minister in the body undergoes a strict examination ; he is also annually questioned respecting his views of divine truth ; and if any case of erroneous doctrine or of corrupt practice occur, it is immediately investigated, and decided upon ; so that no congregation can be

permanently perplexed by strange doctrines, nor scandalized by immoral ministerial conduct.

The external order of this ministry is presbyterian, with the advantages of a modified episcopacy ; for every superintendent of a circuit has the oversight of his colleagues, and the conference has the oversight of the entire pastorate. Jonathan Crowther has the oversight of the Wesleyan missions in India, and John Waterhouse of those in Australasia. In all these cases there is an undeniable and beneficial episcopacy, not by divine right, but as matter of voluntary arrangement, which may be altered as circumstances require, and that without violating any principle of Christian order, as specified in the New Testament.

If there ever was a true minister of Christ upon earth, since the last of the apostles died, John Wesley was one. Truly "the signs" of such a minister were found in him, whether we regard his natural endowments and acquired abilities, his piety, his labours, or his success. He was a presbyter of the Church of England ; yet was providentially placed at the head of a vast body of spiritual people, who were his children in the Lord, saved by the gospel. Through the greater part of his life he laboured to preserve them in union with the Church to

which he belonged, but was hindered by means which he could not control; so that he formally ordained several of his preachers, not only to publish the gospel, but to administer the sacraments; declaring that, as a presbyter, he believed himself to be as Scriptural a bishop as any man in Europe.\* In accordance with his principles and arrangements, from a period not many years subsequent to his death, all who have entered into this ministry have received an appointment to the same service. If, therefore, the ministrations of the Methodist preachers are invalid, so are the ministrations of the clergy of the Scottish Church, of the Lutheran Churches of Germany, and of the Reformed

\* The fact of Mr. Wesley's ordinations is carefully concealed in the tracts against Methodism which have recently been published; and is, in effect, denied by the Messrs. Wilberforce, in the Life of their father. The true nature of those ordinations is most inexcusably misrepresented by Dr. Pusey, in his "Letter to the Bishop of Oxford." The misstatements of all these gentlemen admit of no palliation. The writer who misleads his readers violates his first duty toward them. An ample account of Mr. Wesley's ordinations, and of the manner in which the sacraments were introduced into the Methodist chapels, is given in the Life of the Rev. Charles Wesley, recently published in two volumes, 8vo.

[Published also at the Methodist Book Room, 200 Mulberry-street, New-York, in one vol., 8vo.—*Am. Ed.*]

Churches of Holland, France, and Switzerland; as well as those of every class of evangelical Dissenters in our own country. The principles which deny that the preachers connected with the Wesleyan conference are true ministers of Christ, deny the same character to John Arndt and Albert Bengel; to John Claude and James Saurin; to Richard Baxter, John Howe, and William Bates; to Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge; to David Brainerd, John Eliot, and Jonathan Edwards; to Frederick Swartz, William Carey, and Felix Neff; to Robert Hall, Thomas Chalmers, and Adolphe Monod. In such company no man has any reason to be ashamed. It is our honest boast, that we have a ministry which neither crouches to the hierarchy of Papal Rome, nor panders to her exclusiveness and vanity.

But if the case were otherwise, and there were serious technical defects and oversights connected with the Wesleyan ministry, my attachment to it would be unshaken. "Charity is above all rubrics," said an eminent Churchman; and the salvation of redeemed men is of more importance than any form of ecclesiastical order. Had it not been for the Wesleyan ministry, according to all human probability, millions of people must have perished in igno-

rance and sin, who have been saved from both, and will stand with the Lamb upon Mount Zion. The success of Methodist preaching, blessed be God, is not a matter of opinion, but of fact, plain, tangible, obvious ; and has been so for more than a hundred years. It is true, that when one of our ministers consecrates the elements of the Lord's supper, he does not communicate a supernatural virtue to the bread and wine, so that they convey spiritual benefit to the receiver, by physical contact with his bodily organs, irrespective of his state of mind. Nor can any man, whatever "succession" he may be in, if the Scriptures are of God, impart such a power to the sacred elements. With such carnal notions of this holy sacrament we have no sympathy ; but at the table of the Lord we commemorate the death of Christ, as the great and only sacrifice for sin ; we "feed on him in our hearts, by" the exercise of a vital "faith with thanksgiving ;" we thus receive the saving benefits of his atonement ; "we love him, because he first loved us ;" we love one another for his sake ; we pray "for the whole estate of Christ's church militant here upon earth ;" we renew our solemn vows of obedience to the will of our Lord ; we sing hymns of praise to Christ, as our God, and we retire,



refreshed and invigorated, to apply ourselves to the duties of our Christian calling. It is in vain, therefore, to tell us, that Christian ordinances in a Methodist chapel, because they are unconnected with episcopacy, are an arid desert, unvisited by a shower, where all is sterility and death; while twice ten thousand cheerful voices exclaim, "He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Thou hast prepared a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over." Psalm xxiii, 2, 3, 5.

No doctrine of Holy Scripture is more prominent, and better ascertained, than that of divine influence. In the conversion of a sinner to holiness, in his subsequent preservation from evil, and in his progressive sanctification, there is a direct interposition of the power and mercy of God. St. Paul, speaking of the success of the gospel in Corinth, says, "I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase. So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase," 1 Cor. iii, 6, 7. St. Peter declares concerning believers, that they "are kept

by the power of God, through faith unto salvation," 1 Pet. i, 5. The Lord Jesus is both "the author and finisher of faith," Heb. xii, 2. Apply these principles to the Wesleyan ministry and societies. It is undeniable that countless multitudes of men, in various countries, addicted to the most ungodly and vicious habits, have by this ministry been effectually changed in their spirit, and reformed in their conduct. They have lived in the fear of God, blameless and upright, and have died full of charity, peace, and hope. It is said, that this ministry is unauthorized and unblessed. I ask then, By what power have these effects been produced? They must have an adequate cause. They cannot be the production of human power; for no man can of himself renew his own nature, any more than the Ethiopian can change his skin, or the leopard his spots. Jer. xiii, 23. They cannot have been produced by the malignant power of Satan; for they are holy, benevolent, and beneficial; and no effect can rise above its cause; no more than a kingdom can stand that is divided against itself. How, then, can these effects be accounted for, but by an acknowledgment of the hand of God? Yes,

"Thou, Lord, alone, the work hast done,  
And bared thine arm in all our sight,

Hast made the reprobates thine own,  
And claim'd the outcasts as thy right.

“ For this the saints lift up their voice,  
And ceaseless praise to thee is given ;  
For this the hosts above rejoice :  
We raise the happiness of heaven !”

Another question connected with this subject also arises, and brings us to the conclusion at which we aim. Is it credible that God would thus signally bless and prosper, and that through a series of ages, among professed Christians and cannibal heathens, among free men and African slaves, a ministry which was exercised in direct violation of his own ordinance, and in opposition to his will ; while many of those ministers of whom he has decidedly approved, as his chosen servants, being in the appointed “ succession,” have been not only useless, but a bitter curse to the world ? The facts are indisputable. The Romish priesthood, in its deepest corruptions, was as much in the alleged “ succession,” as is the most exemplary clergyman of the English Church ; and if this be the test of ministerial authority, how are these facts to be accounted for ? I appeal from a bold and bewildering fanaticism to the common sense and spiritual perceptions of candid and pious men, who dare not attribute to a

diabolical agency effects upon which the goodness and mercy of God are impressed in legible and indelible characters. “Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness,” Isa. v, 20. Whoever may gainsay, I will abide by the Wesleyan ministry, as having been honoured by the special sanction and blessing of almighty God. It has been a means of salvation, not by human, but divine power, to young men and maidens, old men and children, the formal Pharisee and the abandoned profligate, the nominal Christian and the dark idolater. Nothing can be more common, in certain quarters, than to speak of the Wesleyan ministry as “self-appointed” and “unauthorized.” Such cant expressions, however often repeated, go for nothing with sensible people. No man in the Wesleyan body is allowed of himself to assume this ministry. Men are appointed to it upon New Testament principles, and with far greater caution than has been exercised with respect to many of those who speak of it in language of contempt. As to its “authority,” let facts speak. Under God’s blessing, we can bear human scorn. “Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name give glory, for thy mercy, and for thy truth’s sake,” Psalm cxv, 1.

In forming my resolution to remain in the Wesleyan body, I conceive that I am acting in full accordance with the will of God, as declared in his word, and indicated by his providence. There was a time when several erring disciples thought it far better that people should be tormented by evil spirits, than relieved by what was thought to be an irregular instrumentality; but our blessed Lord rebuked their bigotry, and taught them a more catholic lesson. "And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part." Mark ix, 38-40.

To my feelings, as a Protestant, an appeal has often been made. It is alleged that the recent revival of Popery, and its spread in the British empire, both at home and in the colonies, are events big with the most important consequences; such as no Protestant can contemplate but with the deepest anxiety; and that, if the Wesleyan body were perfectly one with the established Church, she would be rendered so formidable to the common foe, as effectually to

avert the danger which every one sees to be impending. There is plausibility in these suggestions, but little truth. The Methodists derive their power from their union. Dissolve that union, by amalgamating their societies with the Church, and their power is gone; while the Church, as such, receives no perceptible increase of strength. Take, for example, the important town of Leeds, where the Methodists are numerous, and have several large chapels, in which many thousands of people statelyly congregate for divine worship. Break up their societies, and place them and the congregations worshipping with them under the care of the vicar, so that they may admire all the Popish foppery connected with the late consecration of the parish church, by which the public mind was so greatly scandalized; and these united and zealous Protestants become at once half-Papists.\* Nay, if the doctrines which are

\* It will be recollected that our countryman, Bishop Doane of New-Jersey, preached the sermon at this consecration. Were it not that it is rather desirable to suppress and forget, than to circulate and give perpetuity to such scenes as are reported in the papers to have taken place at this *consecration*, we would give them in detail. But this we forbear to do, wishing rather to cover them with the mantle of oblivion. Suffice it to say, that if the bishop (since dignified by Dr. Pusey with the title of *Lord Bishop*)

at this day strenuously enforced by many of the clergy be true, there is really nothing in Protestantism that is worth contending for; the Reformation was a calamity and a crime; and the sooner the remembrance of it is obliterated, the better. Are these the men who are to avail themselves of Methodist aid in repelling the encroachments of Popery? Let them become Protestants themselves, before they talk of Protestant aid. The interests of Scriptural Christianity are indeed at stake; and therefore Wesleyan Methodism as a sworn friend of those interests, and an antagonist element to Popery, and to every other form of antichristian error, must be preserved in unimpaired energy. The world everywhere needs its influence; and so far as I am concerned, the world shall enjoy all its benefits. I conceive that it is, in its place, as essential to the welfare of mankind as the established Church, or any other form of Christian truth and order.

of New-Jersey should have no other proof of his being in the true succession, it will perhaps be quite enough to satiate his thirst for *all the signs of the apostolic office*, to have it handed down to posterity, that he preached the sermon on the occasion of the "*Leed's dedication*"—made a speech at the "*lunch*," and was handsomely cheered—that noble and orthodox *sentiments* were offered by the clergy; and generous *refreshments* enjoyed by all present.—*Am. Ed.*

There are persons who think that Methodism was necessary at the time of its rise, when there was a general decay of religion in the land ; but that it has fulfilled its design, and is now rather an evil than a blessing to the community, since there has been a vast increase of zeal and activity among the clergy. But in these views it is impossible to acquiesce. Much of the clerical zeal which has been called forth, is undeniably expended in the recommendation of obsolete rites and forms, and in opposing those vital principles of evangelical truth, and of personal religion, for the establishment of which the Wesleys laboured with almost unexampled diligence. The spiritual and moral wants of the nation are not yet supplied ; vast masses of the people are still ignorant and wicked ; population extends beyond all the means of Christian instruction yet provided ; and the agency of Methodism, it is hoped, will still be put forth with unabated fidelity, whatever forms of opposition it may encounter. While the law of toleration remains unrepealed, let there be no relaxation of effort ; but every exertion made, not to make pious church-goers Methodists, but to reclaim the ungodly. There are quarters in which the annihilation of every Protestant institution is contemplated ; and for



the attainment of this object neither wealth nor labour will be spared. No Protestant, therefore, and especially no Wesleyan Methodist, must sleep at the post of duty.

For thus speaking men may call me schismatic, or what else they please. I was placed in my present position, as a Wesleyan Methodist, not for purposes of faction ; God is witness ; nor through enmity to the established Church ; (which on many accounts I sincerely venerate ; ) but simply with reference to the salvation of my soul. The blessed societies of Christian people with which I am connected were all formed and are perpetuated with an exclusive regard for objects purely spiritual. Separatists we are, and must necessarily be, as are all other Christians ; but our separation is not that which the Holy Scriptures condemn under the name of schism. Upon the principles of the New Testament, and according to the practice of a majority of Protestant communities, our ministry is as valid as that which is exercised in any other section of the Christian church. Are the national clergy ministers of Christ ? So are Wesleyan preachers : nor are they, at this day, taking number for number, in efficiency and success surpassed by any of Christ's faithful servants. " I speak as a fool," in making these

statements ; but wise men compel me. Wesleyan Methodists we are called, for the sake of distinction ; but we are catholic Christians ; and claim affinity with all who “ worship God in the Spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh.” I revere the memory of the Rev. John Wesley, on account of his personal qualities, and the extensive and permanent good of which he was made the honoured instrument in the hand of the Lord ; “ but God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world. For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision avail-eth any thing, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. And as many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God. FROM HENCEFORTH LET NO MAN TROUBLE ME.”

AN EXAMINATION

OF

A TRACT ENTITLED

“TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE, No. 4—METHODISM AS  
HELD BY WESLEY. BY D. S. P.”

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BY REV. GEORGE PECK, D. D.



## ADVERTISEMENT

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[The following *examination* was first published in the form of a tract, (No. 305 of the regular series.) It has been thought proper to republish it in connection with the preceding work, as it seems to constitute a regular amplification of the views of the author, and both together constitute a complete defence of Methodism and her institutions.]



AN EXAMINATION  
OF  
TRACTS FOR THE PEOPLE, No. 4.

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THE production which I am about to examine, some time since fell into my hands, and upon a slight inspection I concluded that its sophistry and falsehood were too prominently developed to enlist much sympathy from enlightened Churchmen, or to require exposure from Methodists.

Of course I thought no more of the Tract, until I received a request, officially signed, from the leaders' meeting of Ridgefield, Conn., informing me that it had been diligently circulated by the Episcopal clergyman of that place, and was doing harm among people not thoroughly read in Methodist history; and requesting me to answer it in a discourse upon a particular day when I was expected to be in that place.

Having lost sight of my copy, and not being able to recover it, I called at a respectable bookstore in the city, where, on a former occasion,

I had observed a quantity of these Tracts upon the counter, in order to obtain one. I was told that *the bishop of the western diocess of this state had just taken all they had on hand for the use of his diocess.* I then called at the office of "the Protestant Episcopal Tract Society," where I found them for sale, and was able to procure a copy.

After as full a review of the Tract as I could give in a discourse of reasonable length, in the church at Ridgefield, a vote was passed by the congregation requesting me to publish my answer in a tract. And it is in compliance with this request, and in accordance with the advice of several judicious friends, that in this form I now attempt to expose the errors of this notable assault upon Methodism.

I make this explanation to justify myself for what might seem to many an undue amount of attention bestowed upon a *very small trifle.* I wish to say explicitly, that I feel no sort of respect for the author of the Tract. For while he aims a deadly blow at the Methodist Episcopal Church, he tries hard to conceal himself; only giving the initials of his name, and lest these should be understood, inserting one of them in a character which few of "the people" would be able to decipher. Not even the print-



er's name, or the place of publication, is attached to the Tract. It is said, indeed, to be "printed for the publishers," but who these "publishers" are, or where they live, we are not told. Such a production, coming forth *without a local habitation or a name*, could not, on its own account, claim the least attention.

But having been copied entire in at least one official paper of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and being circulated by the bishops and clergy of that Church, we may fairly conclude they have adopted it, and are willing to be held responsible for its contents. I shall, of course, make but few allusions to the nameless author, but shall consider the attack as one *concerted by leading clergymen* in the Protestant Episcopal Church, and so will the public consider it until it is distinctly disavowed. Inoffensive as would be this strange production, if left to stand or fall upon its own merits, it receives a character and an importance from its foster parents, which even the writer's name would not impart to it, had he the courage to avow himself the author. I wish it, then, to be distinctly understood, that the fact of its having been employed for sectarian purposes by the Church clergy, and not the intrinsic merits of this Tract, is my justification for calling public

attention to it, and perhaps, by so doing, wresting it from oblivion.

In this examination I shall follow the method of the Tract.

“INTRODUCTION.”

In the introduction the plans and objects of the Tract are announced. “The *spirit*—will be found Christian.” Well if it might be. “The *object*—is to make contribution to the tide of effort abroad in behalf of catholic truth.” What species of “catholic truth?” “Particularly to the solicitous exertions making for the UNITY of the CHURCH OF GOD.” A good object, if rightly pursued. “The *method* will not be that of *concessions*.” No, truly! for “men are not thought to be vested with the *right to traffic* in the things of God.—To concede that which God has himself established, is *treachery*.” All correct, but when did “God himself” establish the details of the government in use in the Protestant Episcopal Church? “But, the belief is held, that the church of God exists in the earth under *one* and a *visible organization*.\*” The very many other opposing organizations,

\* When we quote the Tract we follow its italicising and capitalising.

then, cannot be right." No, indeed! If the premises are well founded, the conclusion is legitimate. But where is this "one visible organization" to be found?

"No railing at Methodism will be here." Thank you, sir. "It will not be attempted to prove that Methodism is fanatical; nor ignorant; nor that it is enthusiastic." Hold, friend, you forget yourself; you will soon become a Dissenter. Know you not that you are leaving "the old paths"—the paths marked out by your reverend bishops? The good bishop of the diocese of New-York can scarcely allude to Wesley and Whitefield without the stereotyped epithets, "*enthusiastical*," "*fanatical*,"\* &c. But thanks to the spirit of these happy times, the Methodists are now to have fair play. They may no more expect to be called *ignorant fanatics*, *enthusiasts*, and the like.

"These common attacks are passed by as only exasperating themes; which effect, however well sustained, no decisive issue." After all, perhaps, I was a little too much elated with the assurances of kindness and charity which are here given; for seeming fearful lest this spirit of courtesy and kindness should be con-

\* See his Address before the late convention held in this city.

strued into *heresy*, or a tendency to *schism*, it is drily insinuated that after all these "themes" are "well sustained," and are only waived in the present instance as a matter of *policy*.

"But higher and vital ground is taken. It will be proved, that *Methodism is not a church—has no sacraments ; no ministry ; no divine warrant*. WESLEY is the WITNESS." "*Methodism not a church!*" Whoever could have conceived that a form of Christian doctrine and discipline "is not a church!" For myself, I should not have thought of calling any "*ism*" "*a church*," but for the wise discovery of this man of the Tract, that "*Methodism is not a church*." This writer's *ism* must, I suppose, be "*a church*," or rather "*THE Church!*" But, saying nothing of the *precise* and *accurate* phraseology of the Tract, it is not difficult to see what is its aim.

Our friends of the Church have exerted their skill in ecclesiastical history and logical criticism. They have met us with the holy fathers and the infallible traditions of the church catholic, but all has hitherto been without success. They have now, it is quite probable, come to their last resort; and that is to bring into the field the great, the good, the learned, the logical JOHN WESLEY! confident that if they can turn against us our own Wesley, the victory

will be certain, and the triumph complete. We will see presently with what success this manœuvre is managed.

Finally, I suppose I should not neglect to notify the reader that this singular Tract is written "in love—and with earnest prayer for the approbation and blessing of God for that which is truth." All this would be well, if well carried out. But the *piety* and *charity* of the Tract, I am free to confess, do not strike me as of a very elevated character. It is a little too obvious what the writer means by "truth," and who are the objects of his "love."

After this very promising "introduction," the reader will be prepared for a statement of the positions to be proved in the body of the work, as follows:—"METHODISM, not a church, but a society; without sacraments, without a ministry, without divine warrant: seen in its origin, its progress, and its design."

"I. *The Wesleys.*"

Here we have a singular specimen of logical skill. The following language is quoted from the Wesleys, viz.: "I declare once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England;" and, "My affection for the Church is as strong as ever, and I clearly see my call-

ing ; which is, to live and die in her communion." And logically enough is it concluded that the Wesleys "were both within the bosom of the Church of England," but what follows is not quite so clear. It is this : "If the Methodists stand connected with Wesley, then, and *are* a church, it is because they are in the Church of England ; or in that which is its representative here, the Protestant Episcopal Church."

Here the reader will observe that the argument assumes that Wesley held such a relation to the Church of England as necessarily required that all the Methodists from his day to the end of time must be good members of that Church. This is assuming what is not true. For during Mr. Wesley's life many, and perhaps the greater part of the Methodists, were gathered up from the mass of non-church going persons, and such as were never members of the Church of England. And many Dissenters became Methodists without ever becoming attached to the national Church. So that we may now hold a relation to Wesley and be "a church," without being "in the Church of England," or in "its representative here."

But is "the Protestant Episcopal Church" only a "*representative*" of "the Church of England?" I have hitherto understood our Church

people to claim for the Protestant Episcopal Church the relation of a *sister*, or, at least, a *daughter* to the Church of England; but now we learn she is neither—not even a church, but a mere *representative* of a Church! Is not this lowering the tone? And, if indeed the Protestant Episcopal Church is a mere representative of the Church of England, how would our connection with it be necessary to a connection with Wesley? Is the Church here such a representative of the Church of England as the pope's legate is of the pope? so that the acts of the Protestant Episcopal Church are the acts of the Church of England? Has she no original jurisdiction? Has she no independence? Has she no identity of her own? This is setting her in a new and singular position.

“ II. *Their first steps.*”

There is little under this head that requires notice. Upon the remark of Mr. Wesley concerning the Oxford Methodists, that “they had no peculiar opinions,” we have this commentary: “That is, they did not start any thing *new*; they only kept and elevated that which was established.” This gloss has in it some truth and some falsehood. The students at the University of Oxford who, by way of reproach,

were called Methodists, did claim that they had broached no opinions which were not fully sustained by the articles, homilies, and liturgy of the Church. But, unfortunately, well as these things were "established," they had gone out of use, and when agitated in the Church they were denounced as *novelties*. The apparatus of Methodism, as it arose to a system under the labours of the Wesleys, was, in fact, "a new thing" in the Church of England.

But it is further said, that "if by these means they excited attention and remark, and revived religion then, it is beyond doubt that any set of men, equally honest and consistent, would do the same now." And will our Churchmen admit that there are now no men "equally honest and consistent" in the Church? If they would repel this supposition as reproachful, where are the men among them who are prepared to "do the same" that the Wesleys did? Let them show themselves, and we will hail them as brethren in the Lord. In the mean time we will try to be thankful that these much-abused men, the Wesleys, are getting into a little better credit with Churchmen than in times gone by.



“ III. *The name they got, and why.*”

After several extracts from Mr. Wesley's Works, showing how the name Methodist originated, &c., it is remarked, “ Here it is seen more fully that they did not start any thing *new*, and that neither indeed was it their intention to do so. Though called Methodists, they did not yet, neither did any one else, dream that they were a church.” The Methodist connection was not, nor is it now in England, called “ a church.” But does this prove that it is not a church in fact? Of this more anon. Lest his formerly-quoted authorities should not be sufficient, the following passage from the fifty-fifth Sermon of Mr. Wesley is quoted, viz. :—“ What is Methodism? What does this new word mean? Is it a new religion? This is a very common, nay, almost a universal supposition; but nothing can be more remote from the truth. It is a mistake all over. The religion of the Bible is Methodism. The religion of the primitive church is Methodism. The religion of the Church of England is Methodism; as appears from all her authentic records, from the uniform tenor of her liturgy, and from numberless passages in her homilies. This Scriptural, primitive religion, is to be found in her morn-

ing and evening service, and in her daily, as well as occasional prayers." And upon this it is remarked, "It appears calmly and strictly fair now to say, standing close to Mr. Wesley, that if any one has gone out of the Church of England and set up some new thing, he not only is not a Methodist, but he is not a primitive Christian—he is not a Bible Christian. So it is just to say, unless Mr. Wesley be contradicted. Yes, he only is the original and consistent Methodist who continues a faithful member of the Church as existing in England, and starts nothing new. To say that something which *differs* from that Church is Methodism, is, in the words of Wesley, 'a mistake all over.'"

Full wisely argued! And supposing "the religion of the Bible" and "of the primitive church," and "of the Church of England—as *appears from all her authentic records*"—to have been repudiated by the bishops and clergy, must those who embrace this "religion," under the name of Methodism, necessarily be in connection with these men, and subject to their spiritual jurisdiction? No such thing. Mr. Wesley never required any one, who had not previously been a member of the established Church, to become such. And will our Churchmen concede that Methodism, as propagated by Mr.

Wesley, is “the religion of the Church of England,” and is “nothing new?” The religion of the Church of England, as found in her liturgy and in her homilies, is a very different thing from that religion as exhibited and maintained in the lives and preaching of her clergy, especially as in the days of Wesley. And as that religion was represented by the dignitaries of that Church, Mr. Wesley was as far from embracing it as any Methodist of the present day, as will be hereafter shown.

“IV *Objects of those first steps.*”

These are, 1. Personal; and, 2. Public. Under the latter subdivision we have the following strange compliment to the Wesleys: —“They wished, if not to make an *impress* on their generation, at least to work, like men in the panoply of Christ, for the well-being and the serious elevation of the living of their day. It may be unhesitatingly and calmly said, that they had no narrow views; that their benevolence was as comprehensive as the heart of their Master; and that according to their calling, and within their sphere, they would do more than exist, they would efficiently LIVE.” All very fine, excepting the extent of “their benevolence.” Much as Methodists venerate

the character of the Wesleys, I doubt if one of them was ever heard to attribute to them a "benevolence as comprehensive as the heart of their Master." We have not yet canonized our Wesleys, nor attributed to them any super-human qualities. But the reader may safely conclude all this means just nothing. The praise is so high and extravagant that it is utterly worthless.

We next have several striking passages from Mr. Wesley's pen, of which the following is a specimen :—" Sunday, April 12," he says, " I met the society and explained to them, at large, the original design of the Methodists, viz. : not to be a distinct party, but to stir up all parties, Christians or heathens, to worship God in spirit and in truth ; but the Church of England in particular ; to which they belonged from the beginning." From this it is legitimately concluded that the Wesleys " did not depart" from the " Church of England." But not quite so logically, that " Christianity as in England formed, it was, to which they would give universal establishment." For there were defects in the Establishment which the Wesleys never vindicated or desired to perpetuate, nor is there a particle of proof to this point in the passages quoted.

It is further concluded, "Nothing was in their mind the most remote of forming a new church; and while the parts of Methodism were considered as good working appendages to the Church, that was the utmost they were considered." All very true, so far as it relates to the original designs of the Wesleys. They did not set out with a plan of forming a new sect. This they wholly disclaimed, as Methodists have often been obliged to prove, in defence of the character of these men of God against the charge of ambition, and a concerted plan to raise themselves a name.

*"V Organization consequent on their doings."*

Here we have the following important and seemingly candid concession:—

"Their zeal could not be other than productive of strong effects. Community after community was awakened; until, without a figure, it may be said, that, in some parts with more excitement, in some with less, England was aroused. The Wesleys, with their co-working ministers of the Church, as it might be expected, were they to whom the inquiring and the serious resorted for instruction and guidance in the state of things thus produced. The throngs thus coming were too great and too irregular at

length for the time or the strength of these few ministers, and *plans* of procedure being thus as it were imperatively required, a mind so methodically cast as that of Wesley could not long delay in adopting them. An organized system did at length grow up." *Let all this be well remembered. Truth is often spoken by mistake.*

After a quotation of considerable length, we have several "remarks" which will require some attention. "All this plan," it is said, "would seem at the utmost to have been considered by Wesley as only supplemental, as only an appendage, to the Church, and inferior to it." This statement may be conceded to be true in a sense, that is, so far as the authorities of the Church would permit members of the Establishment to be benefited by Methodism, and so far as they would themselves submit to its influence, so far to them it might be considered "as only an appendage to the Church." But in the same sense, according to the words of Mr. Wesley which are quoted, and which furnish the data for the conclusion under consideration, "this plan" was designed by the founder to be "an appendage" to all other churches. The following is Mr. Wesley's language as quoted in the connection:—"If it be said, He could have made them a separate

people, like the Moravian Brethren ; I answer, This would have been a direct contradiction to his whole design in raising them up ; namely, to spread Scriptural religion throughout the land, among people of every denomination ; leaving every one to hold his own opinions, and to follow his own mode of worship." It is here said that the object of the institution of Methodism is, "to spread Scriptural religion throughout the land, *among people of every denomination* ; leaving every one to hold his own opinions, and to follow his own mode of worship." Now why do not our opponents assert Methodism to be "supplemental" to the Dissenting churches, as well as to the Establishment ? for it was originated for the benefit of "people of every denomination," and required no one, not even the Dissenter, to abandon "his own mode of worship." There need be no difficulty in this view of the subject, arising from the fact, that Methodism came finally to be a system of Christian doctrine, of worship, and of discipline, with a distinct organization, having all the attributes of a church. For this result was not at first provided for or foreseen by the Wesleys. But why this parade of evidence in proof of a fact that no intelligent Methodist ever denied ? The fact admitted, makes

not in the least for the position that is attempted to be proved.

Again it is said, "Wesley looked on this organization of his as only well calculated to strengthen the Church." Nay, sir, not "as *only* well calculated to strengthen the Church," but as well calculated "to spread Scriptural religion *throughout the land, among people of EVERY DENOMINATION.*"

Again, "He does not anywhere hint that this organization had any of the characteristics, even, of a church; or that it was intended to have." Now, I have said before, that the Methodists in England, in the days of Mr. Wesley, did not take to themselves the name of a church, and the same is still the fact. They now style themselves "The Methodist Connection." But that Mr. Wesley "does not anywhere hint that this organization had any of the *characteristics of a church,*" is quite another matter. Indeed, the assertion is palpably false.

To make this appear, I only need show what were Mr. Wesley's views of "the characteristics of a church." The following extracts are taken from Mr. Wesley's Sermon, entitled, "*Of the Church.*"\*

"How much do we almost continually hear

\* See Sermon lxxix, Works, vol. ii, p. 154.



about the church! With many it is matter of daily conversation. And yet how few understand what they talk of: how few know what the term means! A more ambiguous word than this, *the church*, is scarce to be found in the English language. It is sometimes taken for a building, set apart for public worship; sometimes for a congregation, or body of people, united together in the service of God. It is only in the latter sense that it is taken in the ensuing discourse.

“It may be taken indifferently for any number of people, how small or great soever. As, ‘where two or three are met together in his name,’ there is Christ; so, (to speak with St. Cyprian,) ‘where two or three believers are met together, there is a church.’ Thus it is that St. Paul, writing to Philemon, mentions ‘the church which was in his house:’ plainly signifying, that even a Christian family may be termed a church.

“Several of those whom God hath *called out of* the world, (so the original word properly signifies,) uniting together in one congregation, formed a larger church; as the church at Jerusalem: that is, all those in Jerusalem whom God had so called.”

“Let us consider, first, who are properly the

church of God? What is the true meaning of that term? 'The church at Ephesus,' as the apostle himself explains it, means, 'the saints,' the holy persons 'that are in Ephesus;' and there assemble themselves together to worship God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ: whether they did this in one, or (as we may probably suppose) in several places. But it is the church in general, the catholic or universal church, which the apostle here considers as one body: comprehending not only the Christians in the house of Philemon, or any one family; not only the Christians of one congregation, of one city, of one province, or nation; but all the persons upon the face of the earth, who answer the character here given."

"What is the church? The catholic or universal church, is, all the persons in the universe whom God hath so called out of the world as to entitle them to the preceding character; as to be 'one body,' united by 'one Spirit;' having 'one faith, one hope, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in them all.'

"That part of this great body, of the universal church, which inhabits any one kingdom or nation, we may properly term a national church; as, the Church of France, the Church of Eng-

land, the Church of Scotland. A smaller part of the universal church are the Christians that inhabit one city or town; as the church of Ephesus, and the rest of the seven churches mentioned in the Revelation. Two or three Christian believers united together, are a church in the narrowest sense of the word. Such was the church in the house of Philemon, and that in the house of Nymphas, mentioned Col. iv, 15. A particular church may, therefore, consist of any number of members, whether two or three, or two or three millions. But still, whether they be larger or smaller, the same idea is to be preserved. They are one body; and have one Spirit, one Lord, one hope, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all.

“This account is exactly agreeable to the nineteenth article of our Church—the Church of England: (only the article includes a little more than the apostle has expressed:)

“*Of the Church.*

“‘The visible church of Christ is a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered.’

“It may be observed, that at the same time our thirty-nine articles were compiled and pub-

lished, a Latin translation of them was published by the same authority. In this the words were, ‘*Cætus credentium,*’ a *congregation of believers*; plainly showing that by *faithful men*, the compilers meant, men endued with *living faith*. This brings the article to a still nearer agreement to the account given by the apostle.

“But it may be doubted, whether the article speaks of a particular church, or of the church universal? The title, ‘Of the Church,’ seems to have reference to the catholic church; but the second clause of the article mentions the particular churches of Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria, and Rome. Perhaps it was intended to take in both: so to define the universal church, as to keep in view the several particular churches of which it is composed.

“These things being considered, it is easy to answer that question, ‘What is the Church of England?’ It is that part, those members of the universal church, who are inhabitants of England. The Church of England is that body of men in England in whom ‘there is one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith;’ which have ‘one baptism,’ and ‘one God and Father of all.’ This, and this alone, is the Church of England, according to the doctrine of the apostle.

“ But the definition of a church, laid down in the article, includes, not only this, but much more, by that remarkable addition : ‘ In which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments be duly administered.’ According to this definition, those congregations in which the pure word of God (a strong expression) is not preached are no parts either of the Church of England, or the church catholic : as neither are those in which the sacraments are not duly administered.”

Now though Mr. Wesley might not assume for the connection the style of a church, and considering that he and his brother Charles, and many others, both among the preachers and private members, were recognised as members of the Establishment, did wisely judge that it was the better course to avoid appropriating to the Methodists the title of church, yet who would suppose from this that he did not consider the Methodists “ a congregation or body of people, united together in the service of God ?”

But comment is unnecessary. I might fill a volume with quotations from the very sources from which the writer of the Tract professes to derive his evidence, in proof of the utter falsity and folly of his statement upon the point in question. What he says Mr. Wesley “ does

not anywhere hint," is a clear and necessary result of his views of the Church, as explicitly asserted in numerous passages in his writings.

“ VI. *The appointment of preachers.*”

We have here a long extract from Mr. Wesley's Sermon on “ the Ministerial Office.”\* As the last paragraph of the quotation contains the point upon which the stress is laid, we shall only quote that. It is as follows :—

“ I wish all of you who are vulgarly termed Methodists would seriously consider what has been said. And particularly you whom God hath commissioned to call sinners to repentance. It does by no means follow from hence, that ye are commissioned to baptize, or to administer the Lord's supper. Ye never dreamed of this, for ten or twenty years after ye began to preach. Ye did not then, like Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, ‘ seek the priesthood also.’ Ye knew, ‘ no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.’ O contain yourselves within your own bounds.”

Upon this we have some wise “ remarks.” It is said, that “ from the conclusions embraced in this language, there seems no possibility of turning, It comes as in lines of light, that Mr.

\* Sermon cxxxix, Works, vol. ii, p. 539.

Wesley had no intention of appointing ministers. He looks upon any such assumption of the sacred office by his preachers, as the sin of Korah—as nothing less than *rebellion against God*. And he rebukes it with stern severity.”

Now let us inquire whether “the conclusions” of the Tract follow legitimately from the premises laid down.

1. Let it be observed that the object of the sermon, from which the extract is taken, is to establish a distinction between the *prophetic* and the *priestly* offices; and hence to prove that an appointment to the work of a *preacher* does not necessarily imply *the right to administer the ordinances*. And what difficulty is there in admitting all this? Though the Christian ministry is not in the New Testament called a *priesthood*, and in the use of the word “priest,” Mr. Wesley follows the common error committed by Churchmen, yet we may admit, and indeed the Methodist Episcopal Church does admit in practice, all that Mr. Wesley here labours to prove. We first *license* men to *preach*, and require the travelling preachers to perform the functions of this office for two years, and the local preachers for four, before they can be ordained; and until they are ordained, they are not permitted to administer the sacraments.

2. The error, to the refutation of which Mr. Wesley directs his argument, is, that a simple appointment to the office of a preacher of God's word constitutes a title to administer the ordinances. Some of the preachers had acted upon this principle without any ordination whatsoever. This was bringing confusion into the connection, and required a prompt and decisive remedy. This assuming what Mr. Wesley calls "the priest's office," without his approbation or a formal consecration, and contrary to the decisions of the conference, it is strongly insinuated in this Sermon, was "the sin of Korah."

But, 3. All this is not at all to the point of a *right*, upon the part of Mr. Wesley, should it be thought expedient, to set apart persons to the office of *presbyter*, and so properly to authorize them to administer the sacraments.

And, finally, that the ordination of ministers was not in Mr. Wesley's view inconsistent with the doctrines of the Sermon in question is most evident, from the fact that he did, about the time of its publication, ordain three of his preachers to administer the sacraments wherever they might find it necessary or useful to do so. Of this fact I shall now give the most undoubted evidence.



Mr. Wesley's answer to the anxious inquiry of his distressed people whether—when the minister of the parish, wherein they dwelled, walked in the way to hell himself, and taught his flock to do the same—he would advise them to “meet in their own preaching house,” is thus noticed by Mr. Jackson, in his *Life of Charles Wesley* :—

“Where this is really the case, I cannot blame them if they do. Although, therefore, I earnestly oppose the general separation of the Methodists from the Church, yet I cannot condemn such a partial separation in this particular case. I believe, to separate thus far from these miserable wretches, who are the scandal of our Church and nation, would be for the honour of our Church, as well as to the glory of God.”

Mr. Jackson then proceeds :—

“In accordance with these principles, and with an existing state of things which he deeply regretted, but could not control, Mr. Wesley ordained three of his preachers to administer the sacraments in England, wherever they might deem it necessary ; but in a sermon on the sacred office, published about the same time, he strongly urged upon the body of the preachers the duty of confining themselves to preaching

the word of life, as their original and special calling, and to abstain from administering the sacraments altogether. The three men whom he selected from their brethren, and invested with what he considered the full ministerial character, were Mr. Alexander Mather, Thomas Rankin, and Henry Moore. The following is a copy of the certificate of ordination given to Mr. Moore, as published by himself:—

‘ Know all men by these presents, that I, John Wesley, late fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, did, on the day of the date hereof, by the imposition of my hands and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) set apart Henry Moore for the office of a presbyter in the church of God: a man whom I judge qualified to feed the flock of Christ, and to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord’s supper, according to the usage of the Church of England; and as such I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern. In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this twenty-seventh day of February, in the year of our Lord 1789. JOHN WESLEY.

‘ Present and assisting,

‘ JAMES CREIGHTON, } Presbyters of the  
 ‘ PEARD DICKENSON, } Church of England.’

“With this document, and the facts connected with it before him, the reader will perceive what credit is due to the Messrs. Wilberforce and Dr. Pusey, in their statements respecting Mr. Wesley and his preachers. The brothers assert, in the Life of their father, ‘John Wesley was no Dissenter, nor were any of his preachers suffered during his life-time to attempt to administer the sacraments of the Church.’ The Oxford professor avers, with equal confidence, ‘that Wesley reluctantly took the step of ordaining at all : that he meant those whom he ordained to be subordinate auxiliaries to the ministry; and that, to the last, he refused, in the strongest terms, his consent that those thus ordained should take upon them to administer the sacraments. He felt that it exceeded his powers, and so inhibited it, however it might diminish the numbers of the society he had formed.’\*

“Thus it is that grave men, whose very office binds them to attach a peculiar sacredness to truth, fearlessly dogmatize on subjects which they never took the pains to understand ! Mr. Wesley expressly appointed about twenty of his preachers to perform those acts which

\* Letter to the bishop of Oxford, p. 151.

these clergymen tell the world he absolutely forbade them to meddle with ! thus dealing their censures blindfold, regardless of the injury they may inflict. With a large class of writers it seems to be now an admitted principle, that they are under no obligation to confine themselves to strict veracity when speaking of Methodism and its founder. But whatever blame may be justly imputable to Mr. Wesley and his preachers, the men who violate truth, with ample means of correct information within their reach, should be the last to assume the office of censors. A convicted transgressor of the ninth commandment is ill prepared to undergo a strict cross-examination in preferring the charge of 'schism' against his neighbour. Moral precepts are at least as binding as those that relate to church order."

How came Mr. Wesley to "set apart" these men "to the office of presbyters in the church of Christ," if their desiring it was "the sin of Korah?" Would not this have been upon the part of Mr. Wesley, on the principles of the Tract, "rebellion against God?" Here, ye wise and good men of the Church, is your sound high Churchman, John Wesley, either forsaking the order of the Church, or becoming a captain in the company of Korah, Dathan, and

Abiram! Upon which horn of the dilemma will you hang him?

Here I might leave the Tract; for the facts and remarks furnished by Mr. Jackson completely upturn the whole fabric of its speculations upon Mr. Wesley's adherence to the order of the Church; but to avoid all ground for the pretence that any of its material arguments have been overlooked, I must proceed.

Next it is attempted to be proved that Mr. Wesley's ordinations for "Scotland and America" were not proper ordinations to the ministry, but that "the action was only one for an extraordinary and temporary work." It is emphatically alleged that it "*cannot be proved*" that Mr. Wesley "did ordain a ministry for Scotland and America;" and it is very modestly said, that notion "is a mistake that grows out of a misunderstanding of his actions." Well, as it seems our good Churchmen understand Mr. Wesley's "actions" much better than the Methodists do, and perhaps it might be added, much better than Mr. Wesley understood them himself, it will become us to sit at their feet and learn. Listen, then, to several strong arguments, which are designed to set us all right. In proof that Mr. Wesley "did not set up a ministry," it is urged:—

“ 1st. That in the document which is always quoted to prove that Mr. Wesley ordained ministers for America, Mr. Wesley does not at all say that he ordained, but simply that he ‘appointed.’ ”

I will now give “ the document ” to which I suppose reference is here made, and then the reader can judge for himself with what fidelity it is construed in the Tract. It is as follows :—

“ *Bristol, September 10, 1784.*

“ To Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and our brethren in North America :—

“ By a very uncommon train of providences many of the provinces of North America are totally disjoined from the mother country, and erected into independent states. The English government has no power over them, either civil or ecclesiastical, any more than over the states of Holland. A civil authority is exercised over them, partly by the congress, partly by the provincial assemblies. But no one either exercises or claims any ecclesiastical authority at all. In this peculiar situation some thousands of the inhabitants of these states desire my advice, and in compliance with their desire I have drawn up a little sketch.

“ Lord King’s account of the primitive church

convinced me, many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain. For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right, by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused; not only for peace' sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national Church to which I belonged.

“But the case is widely different between England and North America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction. In America there are none, neither any parish minister; so that for some hundreds of miles together there is none either to baptize or administer the Lord's supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's right, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest.

“I have accordingly appointed Dr. Coke and Mr. Francis Asbury to be joint superintendents over our brethren in North America; as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vasey to act as elders among them, by baptizing and administering the Lord's supper. And I have prepared a liturgy, little differing from that of the Church

of England, (I think the best constituted national church in the world,) which I advise all the travelling preachers to use on the Lord's day in all the congregations, reading the litany only on Wednesdays and Fridays, and praying extempore on all other days. I also advise the elders to administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's day.

“If any one will point out a more rational and Scriptural way of feeding and guiding these poor sheep in the wilderness, I will gladly embrace it. At present I cannot see any better method than that I have taken.

“It has indeed been proposed to desire the English bishops to ordain part of our preachers for America. But to this I object: 1. I desired the bishop of London to ordain one, but could not prevail. 2. If they consented, we know the slowness of their proceedings; but the matter admits of no delay. 3. If they would ordain them now, they would expect to govern them. And how grievously would this entangle us! 4. As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the state and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge



it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free.  
 JOHN WESLEY."

In this document Mr. Wesley does say he had "*appointed* Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury to be joint superintendents." But who, excepting our sharp-sighted Churchmen, would ever be able to discriminate between *appointing* and *ordaining*, as the terms are here used? Not to insist, that the original words employed in the New Testament for setting apart to the office of the ministry, simply signify to appoint; let the two paragraphs next preceding the one quoted and relied on by the writer of the Tract be carefully read, and it will appear perfectly plain, that Mr. Wesley's appointments were intended to be understood as *ordinations*.

He had said that "Lord King's account of the primitive church convinced" him "that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to *ordain*;" that "the case is widely different between England and America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction." In America there are none. "Here" his "scruples" were "at an end," and he conceived himself "at full liberty, as" he "violated no order, and invaded

no man's right," to *appoint* and send labourers into the harvest.

Now had this wiseacre looked but with a small amount of attention upon his authority, he could but have seen that in the grave conclusion he draws from it, he insults the common sense of "the people" "for" whose benefit he spends his vast resources.

To make the folly of this main position of the Tract still more obvious, I will here furnish the reader with a copy of the credentials given by Mr. Wesley to Dr. Coke, in connection with the remarks by which they are introduced by Mr. Drew.

"When the conference at Leeds, in 1784, ended, Mr. Wesley repaired to Bristol, and Dr. Coke to London, to make arrangements for his departure. He had not, however, been long in London, before he received a letter from Mr. Wesley requesting him to repair immediately to Bristol, to receive fuller powers; and to bring with him the Rev. Mr. Creighton, a regularly ordained minister, who had long officiated in Mr. Wesley's chapels in London, and assisted him in various branches of his ministerial duties. 'The doctor and Mr. Creighton accordingly met him in Bristol, when, with their assistance, he ordained Mr. Richard What-

coat and Mr. Thomas Vasey presbyters for America; and being peculiarly attached to every rite of the Church of England, did afterward ordain Dr. Coke a superintendent, giving him letters of ordination under his hand and seal.' Of these letters of ordination the following is a faithful copy, carefully transcribed from the original in Mr. Wesley's own handwriting, preserved among the papers of the late Dr. Coke:—

“To all to whom these presents shall come, John Wesley, late fellow of Lincoln College, in Oxford, presbyter of the Church of England, sendeth greeting :

“Whereas many of the people in the southern provinces of North America, who desire to continue under my care, and still adhere to the doctrine and discipline of the Church of England, are greatly distressed for want of ministers to administer the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's supper, according to the usage of the same Church : and whereas there does not appear to be any other way of supplying them with ministers—

“Know all men, that I, *John Wesley*, think myself to be providentially called at this time to set apart some persons for the work of the

ministry in America. And therefore, under the protection of Almighty God, and with a single eye to his glory, I have this day set apart as a superintendent, by the imposition of my hands, and prayer, (being assisted by other ordained ministers,) Thomas Coke, doctor of civil law, a presbyter of the Church of England, and a man whom I judge to be well qualified for that great work. And I do hereby recommend him to all whom it may concern, as a fit person to preside over the flock of Christ. In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this second day of September, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four.

“JOHN WESLEY.”

Here Mr. Wesley says, he thinks himself “providentially called *to set apart* some persons for the *work of the ministry*.” Is not the evidence of these documents quite sufficient to prove that our man of the Tract, with all his shrewdness, has fallen into a mistake as to the material fact in question? But he has more reasons. Let us hear him.

“2d. It is urged, that that *appointment* was not an ordination nor setting apart to the ministry: for, mark this, Dr. Coke, one of those ap-

pointed, was *already* a minister of the Church in England just like Mr. Wesley."

And whoever supposed that Dr. Coke's "appointment" was "a setting apart to the *ministry*?" This was an appointment to the office of "a superintendent."

Another reason is, "That those very preachers when they returned to England *were not allowed there* to administer the sacraments, as they must have been had they been ministers. According to Wesley's object, their duty had ceased."

This reason, especially in the mouth of a member of the Protestant Episcopal Church, is altogether as unaccountable as it is absurd. Was not Bishop White ordained to the episcopal office by the archbishop of Canterbury? and would he or any of the clergy ordained for America, upon a return to England, have been "*allowed there* to administer the sacraments?" Not at all.

In Bishop White's credentials, given under the hand and seal of the archbishop of Canterbury, we find this provision, viz.: "Provided that neither he, the said bishop, nor any person or persons, deriving their consecration from under him, nor any person or persons, admitted to the order of deacon or priest by him or his

successor or successors, shall be enabled to exercise his or their respective office or offices within his majesty's dominion."\* Now from this provision will our Churchmen infer that Bishop White and those ordained by him were not "ministers?" Is it not a pity that these gentlemen, in order to disfranchise us, will disfranchise themselves, and so leave poor America without *regular and permanent ministers*. But I must proceed with the reasons.

"3d. That they were not made nor considered ministers, it is urged, from the fact that Dr. Coke (who was in constant correspondence with Mr. Wesley) applied to Bp. White, of the American Church, in 1791, to ordain the Methodist preachers then in America; which Dr. Coke would not have done surely if those preachers were already thought to be ministers."

Now let it be observed that Dr. Coke never "applied to Bishop White to ordain the Methodist preachers then in America." The doctor did write a letter to Bishop White upon the subject of what he called "a reunion" of the Methodist Episcopal and the Protestant Episcopal Churches, and in discussing the terms, he says, "I do not think that the generality of

\* See Bishop White's "Memoirs of the Protestant Episcopal Church," pp. 322, 323.

them, [that is, the ordained ministers,] perhaps none of them, would refuse to submit to reordination." But he had, at the same time, just said, "Our ordained ministers will not, ought not, to give up their right of administering the sacraments." The doctor here clearly asserts the validity of Methodist "ordinations," but seems to think that for the sake of "reunion" with the Church "reordination" might be *submitted* to. Without entering into the discussion of the question, whether reordination could be admitted without giving up the validity of the former ordination, it is evident enough that Dr. Cokè supposed it might be. In a letter to Mr. Asbury, dated Leeds, Feb. 2, 1808, he says, "I never applied to the convention for reconsecration. I never intended that either you or I should give up our episcopal ordination. My proposal secured our *discipline in all points*." But this matter has been so frequently and fully discussed, I need not enlarge.\* The statements and inferences of the Tract constitute a gross perversion of the whole affair. But to proceed.

\* Whoever wishes to see the subject set in its true light, may consult Bishop White's "Memoirs," pp. 167-171, 343-348; and Bishop Emory's "Defence of our Fathers," sec. vi.

“4th. It is urged, that Wesley cannot be charged with making or supposing his preachers ministers, from the fact that the sermon last quoted, in which he so explicitly *denies* it, was preached and published *five years after* the document usually quoted was given to the preachers who were sent to America; the document being dated 1784, the sermon 1789. So that the first and last expressions of Mr. Wesley were alike.”

I agree with the result here, “that the first and last expressions of Mr. Wesley were alike,” but the fact is, as we have seen, he had said nothing in “the sermon quoted” inconsistent with the act of consecrating ministers for America, or anywhere else. Finally, I come to the concluding argument.

“5th. It is urged, (if an action just in point be required,) that Mr. Wesley could not have intended to set up a new and separating ministry in 1784, from the fact that in 1778, as stated by Moore, a similar attempt made by a large body of American preachers *had been stopped*, and the preachers gave up their pretended orders, for they had gone through a process of ordination, and returned to the early discipline.”

The writer fails to understand the case he



refers to. Several of the preachers at the south, being in doubt whether any provision would be made by Mr. Wesley for introducing the ordinances, assumed the right to ordain each other. This course they consented to abandon, upon being assured by Mr. Asbury that relief would be sought at the hand of Mr. Wesley with all possible despatch.

If any thing more is necessary to prove that Mr. Wesley's appointments were real formal ordinations, a collateral argument may be founded upon his language in relation to his views of his right to confer such ordinations, and the reasons for which he deferred, for a long time, the exercise of that right. August 19, 1785, he writes to his brother Charles thus:—

“REV. SIR,—I will tell you my thoughts with all simplicity, and wait for better information. If you agree with me, well; if not, we can (as Mr. Whitefield used to say) agree to disagree.

“For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning that question: ‘What obedience is due to heathenish priests and mitred infidels?’

“I have from time to time proposed my doubts to the most pious and sensible clergymen I knew. But they gave me no satisfac-

tion ; rather they seemed to be puzzled as well as me. Some obedience I always paid to the bishops, in obedience to the laws of the land. But I cannot see that I am under any obligation to obey them further than those laws require.

“ It is in obedience to those laws that I have never exercised in England the power which I believe God has given me. I firmly believe I am a Scriptural *ἐπισκοπος*, as much as any man in England or in Europe. (For the uninterrupted succession I know to be a fable, which no man ever did or can prove.) But this does in no wise interfere with my remaining in the Church of England ; from which I have no more desire to separate than I had fifty years ago.”

Is this the language of a true high Churchman ? Look at the grounds of this “ obedience to the bishops.” Does he consider them entitled to obedience by the laws of Christ’s kingdom as “ the successors of the apostles ?” No such thing. He says, “ Some obedience I always paid them, *in obedience to the laws of the land.*” Mark the words I have italicised. These bishops were appointed and invested by the state ; they held civil as well as spiritual powers. But no “ further” than “ the laws of

the land" required did Mr. Wesley acknowledge himself "under any obligation to obey them." We have here the key to Mr. Wesley's conformity to the national Church. And if the obedience which he here avows, makes him so true and sound a Churchman as he is claimed to have been, I am not able to see it.

We are now brought to "the second point to be exhibited," which "is, the fact that that appointment was to an extraordinary work, and only to a temporary office." This "point" is laboured to be proved by four arguments, which, at best, in the absence of the documentary evidence which I have presented to the contrary, could make out only a slight probability: but being against the clearest and most fully established facts, can prove nothing at all. I, consequently, shall not particularly notice them. If, indeed, Mr. Wesley intended, as I have proved beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt, to ordain ministers properly such—if he so declares, and sets his hand and seal to testimonials which explicitly convey proper ministerial powers and privileges, why, then, the facts being settled, it is scarcely worth our while to examine the *conjectures* of our learned friend, however solemnly put forth, against these stubborn facts.

“ VII. *Not separatists.*”

Now we are told, “ as a last array of quotations, the appeal is made to Wesley, on this specific and naked point, ‘ Do we separate from the Church ? ’ ” Here follow more than a dozen quotations from Mr. Wesley on the subject of remaining in connection with the Establishment. Upon all this very few remarks are necessary, as it is an effort to prove what Methodists have never denied, viz., that the Wesleys never left the Church, and that they advised all the members of the connection, who had been attached to the Establishment, to follow their example. A *voluntary separation* from the Church was negatived in the conferences whenever discussed. It was determined to proceed in the great work of spreading Scriptural holiness over the land by such means as the word of God authorizes, avoiding all deviations from the order of the Church that were not imperatively called for in the prosecution of this great enterprise. Mr. Wesley’s position is thus expressed in the *Minutes*: “ I fear, when the Methodists leave the Church, God will leave them. But if they are thrust out of it, they will be guiltless.” But there were still many among the preachers and peo-

ple who in practice declined all connection with the Church, and these were tolerated and even treated with great tenderness by Mr. Wesley. In a letter to Charles, dated June 20, 1755, Mr. John Wesley says,—

“Cyprian is a terrible witness of the sense of the then church;\* for he speaks it not as his own private sense, but an incontestible allowed rule: and by *Antistes* there, I really believe he means the minister of a parish. That pinches me. Nevertheless, I think with you, till I get more light; though I should be hard set to defend myself against a skilful adversary. When I am convinced it is my duty, I will follow Cyprian’s advice. The same say you, and no more. I do not fluctuate yet; but I cannot answer the arguments on that side of the question. Joseph Cownley says, ‘For such and such reasons I dare not hear a drunkard preach, or read prayers.’ I answer, I dare: but I cannot answer his reasons.”

In a letter to the Rev. Mr. Walker, dated Sept. 24, 1755, after giving these “reasons” at considerable length, he says,—

“I will freely acknowledge that I cannot

\* The passage in Cyprian is, *Populus a scelerato Antistite separare se debet*. “It is the duty of the people to separate themselves from a wicked bishop.”

answer these arguments to my own satisfaction. So that my conclusion, which I cannot yet give up,—that it is lawful to continue in the Church,—stands, I know not how, almost without any premises that are to bear its weight.”

Here he concedes that the *lawfulness of continuing in the Church* was at least quite doubtful. But if any suppose that Mr. Wesley would have given up Methodism had he been required to do so on penalty of excommunication from the Church, they are much mistaken. In relation to this in the same letter he says,—

“ At present I apprehend those, and those only, to separate from the Church, who either renounce her fundamental doctrines, or refuse to join in her public worship. As yet we have done neither; nor have we taken one step further than we were convinced was our bounden duty. It is from a full conviction of this, that we have, (1.) Preached abroad: (2.) Prayed extempore: (3.) Formed societies: and, (4.) Permitted preachers who were not episcopally ordained. And were we pushed on this side, were there no alternative allowed, we should judge it our bounden duty, rather wholly to separate from the Church, than to give up any one of these points.”

Again he says,—

“I am *proximus ardet Ucalegon!* [The next Ucalegon burns.] The good bishop of London has excommunicated Mr. Gardner for preaching without a license. It is probable the point will now be determined concerning the Church. For if we must either *dissent, or be silent, actum est!* [It is done.] We have no time to trifle!”

From all this it is evident that had the Methodists been forcibly separated from the national Establishment, they would under Mr. Wesley’s authority and advice have organized themselves into an independent church. Knowing this right well, their opponents did not see proper to proceed to extremities.

A distinction should be made here between not separating formally and voluntarily from the Church, and conformity to the usages of the Church. While Mr. Wesley steadily denied the fact of separation, he still confesses he had “varied in some respects, though not from the doctrines, yet from the discipline of the Church of England.” See Works, vol. vii, p. 313. And to the query, whether it was not possible that there would be a separation after he should be dead, Mr. Wesley answers: “Undoubtedly it is. But what I said at the

first conference, forty years ago, I say still; *I dare not omit doing what good I can while I live, for fear of evils that may follow when I am dead.*"—*Ib.*, p. 315.

The following "thoughts on separation from the Church," will present the case with sufficient clearness :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—The question properly refers (when we speak of a separation from the Church) to a total and immediate separation. Such was that of Mr. Ingham's people first, and afterward that of Lady Huntingdon's; who all agreed to form themselves into a separate body without delay, to go to church no more, and to have no more connection with the Church of England than with the Church of Rome.

"Such a separation I have always declared against; and certainly it will not take place (if ever it does) while I live. But a kind of separation has already taken place, and will inevitably spread, though by slow degrees. Those ministers, so called, who neither live nor preach the gospel, I dare not say are sent of God. When one of these is settled, many of the Methodists dare not attend his ministry; so, if there be no other church in that neigh-



bourhood, they go to church no more. This is the case in a few places already, and it will be the case in more ; and no one can justly blame me for this, neither is it contrary to any of my professions. JOHN WESLEY."

But the whole of this is applicable only to the Methodist connection in Great Britain. As to America, Mr. Wesley had provided, as we have seen, that the societies should *remain* separate from the Church of England. He says, "As our American brethren are now totally disentangled, both from the state and the English hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty, simply to follow the Scriptures and the primitive church. And we judge it best that they should stand fast in that liberty wherewith God has so strangely made them free." These are the views of Mr. Wesley, with regard to our relation to "the English hierarchy," and with such views to talk of our *separating* from the *Church* of England is altogether absurd. We could not separate from what we were not in connection with. And certainly we never separated from the Protestant Episcopal Church, for that church came into being after the complete organization of

the Methodist Episcopal Church under Mr. Wesley's directions.

The "remarks" under this head close with a most unaccountable and singular statement. It is this:—"And when Wesley died, and went away to the invisible world, he did not leave, neither was there known such a thing on the earth as a Methodist CHURCH."

I can conceive of but two senses in which this statement can be understood; and one of these only is the probable sense designed to be expressed. The least probable, or perhaps I should say, the improbable sense, is that there was not "a Methodist Church" "on the earth" "when Mr. Wesley died," in the sense in which there is now no such thing; that is, the Methodist Church is not a *true* church, and therefore no such thing as "a Methodist Church," in the *proper* sense, existed "when Mr. Wesley died." This would be saying just nothing. I might with as much propriety say there was no such thing known on the earth as the philosopher's stone "when Mr. Wesley died." This would be nonsense; and as it is not probable "the publishers" of the said Tract would sanction such an instance of folly, whatever the writer might have done, we can scarcely suppose this to be the sense.

The next and only sense in which the statement can be understood, is that no organization claiming to be "a Methodist Church" had an existence "when Wesley died." This the author of the Tract knew to be *false*. He had the documents before him which show that the M. E. Church in the United States was organized in 1784, and that Mr. Wesley died in 1791. Now, what do "the publishers," and the reverend bishops and clergy say to such a palpable falsehood? Will they any longer endorse it by circulating this Tract?

It will have been observed that upon the character of Mr. Wesley's proceedings the Tract takes new ground. The old position was, that Wesley was a schismatic—that his course was utterly irregular, and inimical to the interests of the Church—and that he was in fact, if not in form, a Dissenter of the highest grade. But now, lo! this great renegade and leveller becomes a true réformer, a dutiful son of the Church, wishing only to help on the great work of enlarging the borders, and adding to the true glory of the national Establishment; and the Methodists who are not now in connection with the Church have forsaken Wesley. Now perhaps we ought to be thankful for any concessions on the part of our opponents

in favour of Mr. Wesley, but we are not at the same time desirous that they should mistake facts, and elevate our founder at the expense of truth.

If a mere presbyter can be a good Churchman, and preach in the streets ; and administer the ordinances in unconsecrated houses ; and organize societies ; and institute a ministry—ordaining such persons as he thinks proper for the work—and authorizing them to administer the sacraments ; and claim to be “ a Scriptural bishop ;” and declare the apostolical succession “ a fable ;” and be the founder of a sect ; and totally disregard several of the usages of the Church ; and only pay *civil* obedience to the bishops ; why then Mr. Wesley was a good Churchman. And if he was a good Churchman, the very worst of us might hope to be acknowledged in that character.

I come finally to the “ *conclusion*” of this strange production. The author thinks the case proposed has been made out,—“ Wesley being the witness : 1. That Methodism is not a church. 2. That it has no ministry. 3. That it has no sacraments, or divine warrant.”

On the contrary, I doubt not that the reader who looks with any attention into the merits of the question discussed in the Tract, will con-

clude that the author of that production has rather "made out" himself any thing but an enlightened and candid disputant: that he has not offered any thing, which, properly understood, gives the least support to his preposterous conclusions.

"Were they" (the Methodists) "a church? If they were," says he, "then may the Abolition Society—Moral Reform Society—Temperance Society, become a church."

What parallel is there between these societies and the Methodist Church? Will they answer to the description given of a church in the nineteenth article of the Church of England, as well as the Methodist Episcopal Church? Are they "a congregation of faithful men, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered"? What an obtuseness of vision is here betrayed! But I must not enlarge on such miserable flourishes.

As the writer proceeds in his closing up, he becomes warm. He had previously *argued*, now he *declaims*—becomes vehement, and stuns our ears with the most impassioned exclamations:—

"Can one believe it? Can one trust his religious interests—his interests, that when once moulded are to be unchanged through eternity

—to be moulded and formed by such human inventions ?”

The poor man is in deep distress, no doubt ; but there is no help for him. Methodism is no more a human invention than is *Churchism*. Both are in a certain sense, and in the same sense, “human inventions.” They are forms of Christianity, which, in some of their circumstances, are adjusted by human wisdom under general laws. Let our Church opponents tell us what *divine warrant* they have for their episcopacy, and for the whole apparatus of their liturgy ? A bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church gravely tells us that the *whole Prayer Book, just as it is*, constitutes “the faith once delivered to the saints.” And our anonymous assailant in the Tract prates about “divine warrant,” just as though the constitution, and government, and forms of worship of the P. E. Church, came right down from heaven just as they are ! But the bishop of New-Jersey, and the author of Tract No. 4, if they be different persons, (and I suppose they are,) will have to preach their infinitely absurd dogmas a long time before they will make one sensible convert.

But this Tract makes out the Methodists *wicked*, as well as stupid. In the “conclu-

sion," Wesley is represented as in heaven, "bearing witness against the present pretensions of Methodism, and his voice" as "still consistently declaring these pretensions REBELLION AGAINST GOD!" Again it is said, "they have made Wesley their unqualified opponent; and sinned against God." All that can be consistently said in reply to this grave charge is, that the ipse dixit of Churchmen is not, with the Methodists, the infallible standard of faith and practice. We choose rather to appeal from this their decision to the Bible, and to plain historical facts. If from these we are convicted of "rebellion against God," then let us be to all Christian churches as heathen men and publicans. But the charges, under the circumstances, are the perfection of Popish arrogance and exclusiveness. But for the proof, the Tract does indeed present us with nearly a page of Scripture references upon the doctrine of Christian *unity*. These are called "startling notes against separation." These passages all speak of the unity which should subsist *in the Church*, among its own members. But according to the Tract, the Methodists constitute no part of the Church. They have yet to be converted, and the appropriate message to them, in common with other sinners,

is, "Repent ye, and believe the gospel." But as for those instructions which are given for the edification of "the Church," the poor out-cast Methodists have no interest whatever in them.

But let us survey this ground a little more minutely. The Scripture proofs of our wicked schism are thus presented :—

"Modern Methodists separated from the Church and from original Methodism; they have made Wesley their unqualified opponent; and they sinned against God.

"Proofs of the last declaration are found in the startling notes against separation, which abound in the Scriptures. Take the case of Korah, in whose position, according to the testimony of Wesley, the Methodists now stand. Then see what the Saviour himself says: 'There shall be one-fold and one Shepherd,' John x, 16. 'Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are,' John xvii, 11. And what the primitive Christians exhibited: 'And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul,' Acts iv, 32. And what the Spirit by St. Paul directs: 'I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing,



and that there be no divisions among you ; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment,' 1 Cor. i, 10. And what a divided state makes the Holy Spirit declare : ' Ye are yet carnal : for whereas there is among you envying and strife and divisions,' 1 Cor. iii, 3. And the design God had in framing the church : ' That there should be no schism in the body,' 1 Cor. xii, 25. And then mark the solemn adjurations : ' If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind,' Phil. ii, 1, 2. And that pointed direction : ' Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ,' Rom. xvi, 17, 18. And last, the fearful assertion of the Spirit by St. Jude : ' These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit,' Jude 19."

Before I proceed to consider whether these passages prove any thing to the point, I would observe that, as to "modern Methodists" having "separated from original Methodism," I sup-

pose after the evidence presented in the preceding pages touching the matter, nothing further need be said. We have not "separated from original Methodism." Nor, indeed, have we "separated from the Church." The allegation, in both its parts, is totally false and unjust. But could both counts of this terrible indictment be proved, it would still remain to be shown that we are condemned by the "startling notes" with which we are here presented. It is one thing to aggregate together a mass of passages from the Bible in a certain category, and another to make them suit the purpose for which they are adduced.

Let the reader review the list of passages with which we are here met, and he will be able to judge for himself whether they convict the Methodists of heresy or schism. John x, 16; xvii, 11; Acts iv, 32; 1 Cor. i, 10; and Phil ii, 1, 2, speak of *union in the church* among its members; and 1 Cor. iii, 3; xii, 25, speak of internal divisions—discords among the members of the church. Here occurs the word *schism*, which is used by Churchmen and Romanists as though it had been employed in the word of God for their special benefit.

"The ever memorable Mr. John Hales," in an ingenious tract upon this subject, says,—

“ *Heresy* and *schism*, as they are in common use, are two theological *μοροῦς*, or *scare-crows*, which they who uphold a party in religion, use to fright away such, as making inquiry into it, are ready to relinquish and oppose it, if it appear either erroneous or suspicious. For ‘as *Plutarch* reports of a painter, who having unskilfully painted a cock, chased away all cocks and hens, that so the imperfection of his art might not appear by comparison with nature; so men willing for ends to admit of no fancy but their own, endeavour to hinder an inquiry into it by way of comparison of somewhat with it, peradventure truer, that so the deformity of their own might not appear.

“ *Schism*, I say, upon the very sound of the word imports division: *division* is not but where *communion* is, or ought to be. Now *communion* is the strength and ground of all society, whether *sacred* or *civil*: whosoever, therefore, they be, that offend against this common society and friendliness of men, and cause separation and breach among them, if it be in civil occasions, are guilty of sedition and rebellion; if it be by occasion of ecclesiastical difference, they are guilty of schism: so that schism is an ecclesiastical sedition, as sedition is a lay-schism. Yet the great benefit of communion, notwithstanding

standing, in regard of divers distempers men are subject to, dissension and disunion are often necessary: for when either false or uncertain conclusions are obtruded for truth, and acts either unlawful, or ministering just scruple, are required of us to be performed; in these cases, consent were conspiracy, and open contestation is not faction nor schism, but due Christian animosity”

In addition to the above bitter pill, I will administer to our inflated Churchmen one from the shop of one of the greatest doctors of the Reformation, and one who, when he uttered these words, was the boast and glory of the Church of England. Thus saith “ John Jewell, bishop of Sarum :”—

“ St. Jerome saith unto Marcus : ‘ I am heretike : what is that to thee ? Hold your peace : ye have told your tale.’ By like right Christ himself, by certain of your ancient fathers, was called a *Samaritan*, a deceiver of the people, and an *heretike*. And, if it may please you, soberly and advisedly to consider the matter, ye shall find throughout the whole body of the Scriptures, that no people were ever so great crakes of the *Church*, as they that were the deadly enemies of the *Church* : nor none were so ready to condemn others of *heresie*, as they

that indeed were themselves the greatest *hereticks*.”—*Defence*, p. 554.

The learned Dr. Owen, upon the Scripture use of the term schism, lays down the following unassailable propositions :—

“Some things there are, which upon what hath been spoken, I shall assume and suppose as granted in *Thesi*, until I see them otherwise disproved, then as yet I have done. Of these the first is, That the departing or secession of any man or men, from any particular church, as to that communion, which is peculiar to such a church, which he or they have had therewith, is nowhere called schisme, nor is so in the nature of the thing itselfe, (as the generall signification of the word is restrained by its Scripture use,) but is a thing to be judged, and receive a title according to the causes and circumstances of it.

“2. One churches refusing to hold that communion with another, which ought to be between them, is not schisme properly so called.

“3. The departure of any man or men, from the society or communion of any church whatever, so it be done without strife, variance, judging, and condemning of others, because according to the light of their consciences, they cannot in all things in them worship God ac-

ording to his minde, cannot be rendered evill but from circumstances taken from the persons so doing, or the way and manner, whereby and wherein they doe it.

“Unto these I adde, that if any one can show and evince that we have departed from, and left the communion of any particular church of Christ, with which we ought to walke according to the order above mentioned, or have disturbed and broken the order and union of Christ’s institution, wherein we are or were inwrapped, we put ourselves on the mercy of our judges.”  
—*True Nature of Schism*, chap. vii, sec. 24–27.

If these positions can be maintained, and of their truth there can be no reasonable doubt, then Churchmen and Romanists always wrest this term schism from its original meaning. As Mr. Wesley is becoming so great a favourite with Churchmen, I suppose I may here quote his language. He says,—

“How Favorinus and many more may define both heresy and schism, I am not concerned to know. I well know, heresy is vulgarly defined, ‘a false opinion, touching some necessary article of faith;’ and schism, ‘a causeless separation from a true church.’ But I keep to my Bible, as our Church in her sixth article teaches me to do. Therefore, I cannot take

schism for a separation from a church, true or false ; because I cannot find it is ever so taken in Scripture. The first time I read the term there, is 1 Cor. i: I meet with it again, chap. xi, 18. But it is plain, by schisms in both places is meant, not any separation from the church, but uncharitable divisions in it. For the Corinthians continued to be one church ; and, notwithstanding all their strife and contention, there was no separation of any one party from the rest, with regard to external communion. It is in the same sense the word is used chap. xii, 25. And these are the only places in the New Testament where it occurs. Therefore, the indulging any unkind temper toward our fellow Christians is the true Scriptural schism."

Again,—

"I ask once more, What do you mean by schism? 'Schism! schism! why, it is separating from the Church.' Ay, so it is. And yet every separating from the Church to which we once belonged is not schism ; else you will make all the English to be schismatics, by separating from the Church of Rome. 'But we had just cause.' So doubtless we had ; whereas schism is a causeless separation from the church of Christ. So far so good. But you have many

steps to take before you can make good that conclusion, that a separation from a particular national church, such as the Church of England is, whether with sufficient cause or without, comes under the Scriptural notion of schism.”\*

Now let it be observed, *first*, that we here bring against these men their own witness, the *Rev. John Wesley*. And, *secondly*, that, according to the Scriptural application of the term schism, Romanists and Churchmen are the greatest schismatics in the world, for they are incessantly at war *among themselves*. And, *thirdly*, that though to separate from a church without sufficient cause is wrong, yet it is not in the New Testament called schism. And, *fourthly*, if cause had been sought for a separation from the Church of England, reasons enough, good and sufficient, had not been wanting. But, *finally*, *the Methodists never separated from the Church of England*. In England, all of them who were ever members of the national Church, remained so ; and those who were not, could not, of course, separate. And in America the Methodists never constituted a part of the Church of England, much less of the Pro-

\* See Works, vol. vii, p. 286 ; v, p. 167. For a more extended view of this subject, see Sermon lxxxvi, vol. ii, p. 161.



testant Episcopal Church ; and I surely need not attempt to prove that they have not separated from a body with whom they never held any ecclesiastical connection. If, then, it were to be allowed that schism consists in *a causeless separation from a church duly constituted*, the Methodists are not, upon any principles of justice or legitimate reasoning, liable to the charge of schism. But it is always safest to adhere to the Scriptural use of terms : and especially when a Scriptural term is wrested from its original and proper sense for sectarian purposes, and is made an instrument of assault upon the character and feelings of large and respectable Christian communities, it is time to recur to its original sense. Upon this point Dr. Owen remarks,—

“In all differences about religion to drive them to their rise and spring, and to consider them as stated originally, will ease us of much trouble and labour. Perhaps many of them will not appear so formidable as they are represented. He that sees a great river, is not instantly to conclude that all the water in it comes from its first rise and spring ; the addition of many brookes, showres, and landfloods, have perhaps swelled it to the condition wherein it is : every difference in religion is not to

be thought to be as big as its rise, as it appears to be when it hath passed through many generations, and hath received additions and aggravations from the disputings and contendings of men, on the one hand, and the other, ingaged. What a flood of abominations doth this business of schisme seem to be, as rolling down to us through the writings of Cyprian, Austin, and Optatus, of old: the schoolemen, decrees of Popish councells, with the contrivances of some, among ourselves, concerned to keep up the swelled notion of it! Goe to its rise, and you will find it to be, though bad enough, yet quite another thing, then what by the prejudices accrewing by the addition of so many generations, it is now generally represented to be. The great maxime, To the law and to the testimonie, truly improved, would quickly cure all our distempers: in the mean time, let us blesse God, that though our outward man may possibly be disposed of, according to the apprehension that others have of what we doe, or are, our consciences are concerned only in what he hath appointed. How some men may prevaile against us, before whom we must stand or fall according to their corrupt notion of schisme, we know not: the rule of our consciences, in this as in all other things, is eternall and un-

changeable. While I have an uncontrollable faithfull witness, that I transgresse no limits prescribed to me in the word, that I doe not willingly break, or dissolve any unity of the institution of Jesus Christ, my minde as to this thing is filled with perfect peace. Blessed be God, that hath reserved the sole sovereignty of our consciences in his hand, and not in the least parcelled it out to any of the sons of men, whose tender mercies being oftentimes cruelty itselfe, they would perhaps destroy the soule also, when they doe so to the body, seeing that they stay there, as our Saviour witnesseth, because they can proceed no further; here, then, I professe to rest; in this doth my conscience acquiesce: while I have any comfortable persuasion, on grounds infallible, that I hold the head, and that I am by faith a member of the mysticall body of Christ, while I make profession of all the necessary saving truths of the gospell, while I disturbe not the peace of that particular Church, whereof, by my own consent, I am a member, nor doe raise up, nor continue in any causeless difference with them, or any of them, with whom I walke in the fellowship and order of the gospell, while I labour to exercise faith toward the Lord Jesus Christ, and love toward all the saints, I doe keep the

unity, which is of the appointment of Christ ; and let men say, from principles utterly foraigne to the gossell, what they please, or can, to the contrary, I am no schismatick.”—*True Nature of Schism*, chap. viii, sec. 66.

The next passage presented to convict the “modern Methodists” of wicked “separation,” is Rom. xvi, 17, 18, “Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned ; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ.” How our learned opponents could ever have stumbled upon this passage as appropriate to their purpose, is to me a profound mystery. The “pointed direction” which it contains relates to those who “cause divisions and offences,” not at all to those who quietly separate from such as in their doctrine and practice have left the true foundation, and so rendered themselves dangerous associates and unworthy of confidence. And who are they who “cause divisions and offences ?” All those in the Church who teach, as articles of faith, their own conceits, or the traditions of men, and who impose ceremonies of merely human invention, and make them necessary to salvation or to membership in the Church. And who have been

more guilty of these than Romanists and Churchmen? What Chillingworth says of the former is applicable to both. This great defender of Protestantism says,—

“This presumptuous imposing of the senses of men upon the words of God, the special senses of men upon the general words of God, and laying them upon men’s consciences together, under the equal penalty of death and damnation; this vain conceit that we can speak of the things of God, better than in the words of God: thus deifying our own interpretations, and tyrannous enforcing them upon others: this restraining of the word of God from that latitude and generality, and the understandings of men from that liberty, wherein Christ and the apostles left them, is, and hath been, the only fountain of all the schisms of the church, and that which makes them immortal; the common incendiary of Christendom, and that which (as I said before) tears into pieces, not the coat, but the bowels and members of Christ.”\*

We throw back, then, the charge of “causing divisions and offences” upon our opponents, and let them consider that the fact, that their being justly liable to this charge, is the reason

\* See Works, p. 269.

why we, in a sense, "avoid them." We plead a divine warrant, in this very passage, for peremptorily refusing to unite with self-styled *Catholics*, being here required to "avoid" such as cause "divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which" we "have learned" of our great Teacher.

Do our opponents think this uncharitable? I would say that this is the very defence which the fathers of the English Church, under similar circumstances, made against the Romanists. When the English reformers were charged with causing "divisions and offences," they hurled back the charge upon their accusers, alleging, as in the passage just quoted from Chillingworth, that their accusers were themselves the causes of the schism, and that the responsibility was by no means to be devolved upon them of a separation, which was a measure of safety and a matter of duty. And who was it that caused "divisions and offences" by the acts of uniformity in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and King Charles the Second? And who was guilty of this sin when the Methodists were traduced in all the pulpits of the Church of England, and charged with heresy and schism for preaching the doctrines of that Church and entering into Scriptural measures

for the revival of religion ; and when these same Methodists were forcibly, and contrary to the laws and usages of the Church, *repelled from the sacrament*? But I must forbear. Had I space here, I could give historical facts which would not be very pleasant to our assailants, and I am sure would not by them be very satisfactorily explained.

In the last place, I come to what is called in the Tract, “the fearful assertion of the Spirit by St. Jude, ‘These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit,’ Jude 19.”

This passage refers wholly to *licentious apostates*, and not at all to those who merely leave the communion of the church either with or without cause. And in this construction I am fully sustained by “the judicious Hooker,” the oracle of Churchmen. He says,—

“If they willingly cast off, and utterly forsake both profession of Christ and communion with Christians, taking their leave of all religion, this is to separate themselves by plain apostacy. And St. Jude, to express the manner of their departure which by apostacy fell away from the faith of Christ, saith, ‘They separated themselves;’ noting thereby, that it was not constraint of others which forced them to depart ; it was not infirmity and weakness in

themselves ; it was not fear of persecution to come upon them, whereat their hearts did fail ; it was not grief of torments, whereof they had tasted, and were not able any longer to endure them : no, they voluntarily did separate themselves with a fully-settled and altogether-determined purpose, never to name the Lord Jesus any more, nor to have any fellowship with his saints, but to bend all their counsel, and all their strength, to raze out their memorial from among them.”\*

I now leave with the reader this “startling” text and the commentary upon it by a good Churchman, hoping that our opponents will either show the construction erroneous, or cease to use the text in a way which goes to accuse us not so much of schism as of open apostacy from the faith and practice of Christianity.

And let the intelligent reader judge whether any of the scriptures adduced convict the Methodists, “ancient” or “modern,” of a violation of any divinely-authenticated *note*, of true Christian *union*, or whether indeed our opponents themselves are not directly implicated in these “startling notes of separation.”

These “notes” are indeed sufficiently “start-

\* Eccl. Polity, vol. ii, p. 600.



ling” to those communities which profess to constitute “the holy catholic and apostolic Church.” Is there “no schism in” this “body?” Where is “the Church under *one* and a *visible organization*?” (See the Introduction to the Tract.) Churchmen tell us the Anglican, Roman, and Greek churches constitute distinct branches of the Catholic Church; yet the Catholic Church is “*one* and a *visible organization*?” Now are the Anglican, Roman, and Greek Churches *one*? Are they united in a “*visible organization*?” Nothing further from the fact. These churches have for centuries been in a state of deadly hostility and determined schism. Now let our Churchmen read “the startling notes against separation” which they endeavour to make bear against us, and give them their proper application, in the light of their theory of the Church, and then look out for themselves. More than this: we may admonish Churchmen to look to the state of their own particular Church, and then see with what consistency they read us their homilies on remaining in schism. I do not wish to injure the feelings of Churchmen by unnecessarily diverting to the distractions and contentions which prevail among them. But really their conduct is scarcely to be borne when they

come to us with their "startling notes" on *union* and *schism*, while, in their own communion, both in England and America, they are at open war among themselves. Look, for a specimen, to the "Church Record" and "The Churchman," two Church papers. It would seem that prudence and consistency would dictate to them the propriety of preaching *union* to the members of the Church instead of carrying it abroad to heathens and outcasts.

As we progress in the conclusion, we find a direct "appeal" to several classes of persons, whom, if possible, it seems designed to rally in opposition to Methodism. And, "first," an "appeal" is made "to those who have already chosen their form of religion." Of them it is most solemnly and earnestly demanded,—“Can you countenance and fellowship that as the church of God which is so clearly convicted of being a mere human arrangement? Will you take to your fellowship the Abolition Society, or the Moral Reform Society, and call them churches? If you acknowledge one, why not the three?” Surely “if you acknowledge one, why not the three?” for they are just as much alike as the colour of scarlet is like the sound of a trumpet! But who are thus addressed? Why, to be sure, “those who have

already chosen their form of religion,"—Churchmen, Romanists, Presbyterians, Baptists, &c., &c. Now for a grand rally against the poor Methodists. The "appeal" is made to all Christian communities, and it is demanded whether they "can" "countenance and fellowship" the Methodists "as the church of God?" When our Churchmen shall raise all these forces, and concentrate them against this "mere human arrangement," lo! it may be sought, but shall not be found. But why all this effort? One once said, "If this work be of man, it will come to naught." He supposed no formidable opposition necessary to break up "a mere human arrangement," containing, as it would, the elements of its own dissolution. But our Church opponents must bring into the field a motley host. They must have much help from abroad. Those to whom they have never extended the courtesies of a church must come now to their aid. Come on, then, all sorts and classes, and help our true apostolics to break a poor insect upon the wheel! But this, even, is not enough. Hear! hear!—

"Appeal shall be made next to the intelligent man of the world. Will you countenance and give your support to that which its own founder now repudiates?" Now our Church

friends, doubtless, want "the intelligent men of the world," more especially do they want their "support," and it will not do at all for any of this class of men to "countenance" the Methodists. But let these dear friends of ours know that these same Methodists can get along and sustain their "human arrangement" with comparatively little human "support." They are not easily to be *starved out*. They love the souls of all men, and wish to bring to Christ as many "intelligent men of the world" as possible, but if our kind-hearted Churchmen shall succeed in convincing all this class of persons that they owe all their "support" to "the Church," by God's blessing the Methodists can live among the *simple poor*, as long as can these true successors of the apostles, with all the "support" they can gather around them from the "intelligent men of the world." By this it must not be understood that we have any contempt for this class of persons, or that we undervalue their support. We are grateful to them, but more especially to God, for their influence and their pecuniary aid. Nor have we any fears of losing the support of a single "intelligent man," of any class, by such an effervescence of puerility and folly as we have in Tract No. 4.

But now, in the last place, the Methodist is addressed. Hear, all ye Methodists, wise and unwise, gentle and simple, rich and poor, old and young!—

“And a third appeal shall be made to the Methodist; let him for one serious hour imagine himself in that position where he *is* to stand—even before the bar of God. And let him go over in his mind the investigations and *direct* questionings which *will be* there on this very matter. Let him suppose himself asked how he could put aside such plain language of Mr. Wesley as that:—

“‘Let all our preachers go to church; let all the people go constantly; let them receive the sacrament at every opportunity. Warn all against despising the prayers of the Church; against calling our society a church; against calling our preachers ministers.’

“And then let him suppose the voice from the throne to continue:—

“‘How couldst thou separate and make other organization when there was before thee added to all this MY word, “Be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment?”’

“The Methodist is asked now, How will you answer? how *can* you answer? If you be

a layman, you cannot hang upon your preacher, nor upon your society, nor upon your neighbourhood. Let them do as they please, you must stand or fall by yourself."

The whole a solemn farce! I once heard a Romish priest most solemnly appeal to the final reckoning, and represent his people as all there arraigned for the final examination; and after he had exhausted the stores of his eloquence in painting the scene, he apprized them that then and there *sensual Catholics* would be condemned for *eating flesh on Friday!* And here we are apprized that "the Methodist," when arraigned "before the bar of God," will be questioned "on this very matter," of declining to unite with the *sect of Churchmen!* And it is asked most earnestly, "How *can* you answer?" Dear sir, if you are to be our judge, why, then, we know not what we "*can* answer," nor what will become of us. But as we are sure this will not be the case, and as we have learned to distinguish between your *traditions* and the *blessed word of God*, we fear not being charged at the bar of God with disrespect for the latter because we have refused to bow to the former.

Now for "two closing remarks," and then I shall have done. "It is asked—If Methodism be so wrong, how has it been favoured with so

great success? And the reply is—It has not had so great success as Mohammedanism; and if success be a proof of correctness, Mohammedanism has surpassed Methodism, and is therefore better. But no, no; success is no proof of correctness.” In all candor I ask whether it is to be understood by this that the success of Methodism is to be accounted for on the same principles upon which we account for the success of Mohammedanism? Is there any analogy between the two systems? Are the means by which they have been propagated of the same character? Does Methodism propose to reward its votaries with a sensual paradise? Does she propagate her doctrines by the sword?

It would seem that by “success” here is meant the acquisition of numbers. If this is what is intended, it is truly said that “success is no proof of correctness.” But if our assailants estimate their success by the numbers who rally around their standard, they should be informed that the Methodists do not. They hold their success to be in exact proportion to the influence of their labours upon the spiritual condition of the world. Not to be reckoned according to the numbers who have theoretically embraced their system of doctrine and discipline, but *the numbers converted to God and*

*made pious and orderly members of Christ's mystical body.* And have we no valid evidence from this source that the hand of God is with us? Have the Methodists been able to effect a vastly greater amount of good in a state of schism and "rebellion against God," than have our Churchmen in a state of primitive and apostolic unity, and under the "divine sanction?" This would be passing strange.

The exclusionists of the day may see no more evidence of divine approbation in the great revival of religion, which, under the good hand of God, has resulted from the propagation of Methodism than is to be seen in the success of Mohammedanism, and all this is not wonderful; for it would indeed be strange if blind men could judge of colours. But for us, "our witness is in heaven and our record on high." If we are doing God's work, and God approves of us, we need feel little concern with regard to the views of such men as the writer and the patrons of this Tract. By this, however, it must not be understood that we feel no grief, that men professing Christianity should so widely depart from the principles of Christian courtesy and candor as to institute a comparison between the Methodists and Mohammedans. But for this, and all their other wrongs, we



leave them to answer to their conscience and their God.

“Again, when it is asked—Well, if Methodism be not true, what has become of the thousands who have died in its connection? no reply is pretended: the human mind *cannot tell that*. But it is answered—Let those who are living, SEE TO THEMSELVES! As, if it should be asked—Well, if Christianity be true, what becomes of the heathen? the reply is—LET EVERY MAN SEE TO HIMSELF! The question of the salvation of your neighbour is not left for you to determine; but it is left for you to be sure that you are in the way *most likely to save yourself*.”

No, no. “The human mind cannot tell” “what have become of the thousands who have died in its connection.” Our Churchman can certainly tell that a poor wretched sinner who died impenitent is gone to *rest*, if he chanced to die “in the Church.” The priest will use language over the lifeless body of “our departed brother” which necessarily implies good assurance of the repose of his soul; but no mortal man *can tell* what becomes of the Methodists. I have known many of them die in triumph. I have seen them look at death with a smile, and sink into their eternal state full of hope. And

though our good-natured and pious assailant may endeavour to put their final happiness in doubt, I shall probably continue, until I go the same way, hoping to meet them in heaven.

In conclusion, I would say, that I have endeavoured, in the discussion of the principles and statements of the Tract in question, to speak the truth in good temper. If I have said any thing which is calculated to give unnecessary pain to any individual, and especially to any Christian community, I hope to obtain mercy of the Lord, and I invite the candid criticisms of the aggrieved. I most conscientiously believe that, as Methodists, we have not “for-saken Wesley”—that we have “a church,” a “ministry,” “sacraments,” and as valid a “divine warrant” as any church in Christendom. Bishop Jewell denies being “bound” to obey the pope, because, as he quaintly says, he “had nothing to say for himself, but only, I know not what, virtue or power of the place where he dwelleth, and a continuance of succession.” Churchmen must have stronger claims than this, “I know not what—*continuance of succession*,” or they will not soon reclaim the Methodists.

