

CHAPTER III.

OF MR. WESLEY'S MINISTERIAL LABORS, AND THE SPREAD OF METHODISM, TILL THE CONFERENCE IN 1770: WITH AN EXTRACT FROM THE LARGER MINUTES; GIVING A VIEW OF VARIOUS REGULATIONS RESPECTING THE PREACHERS, &C. &C.

THE materials for this life are so abundant, without having recourse to Mr. Wesley's printed works; and the present volume begins to fill up so very fast, that I shall be obliged in future to take but little notice of the journies of this laborious and successful minister of Christ. Many papers have been put into my hands since the first volume of this work was published. I shall not therefore be able to do more in the remaining part of this volume, than print such extracts from the materials before me, as may exhibit to our view the most striking features of this great man's character, and of the work in which he was engaged.

It has been stated above,* that Mr. Charles Wesley, in the course of the present year, went into Yorkshire, with a commission to inquire more particularly into the character and moral conduct of the preachers in their several stations. He found one or two, who did not walk worthy of the gospel; and several more whom he thought utterly unqualified to preach. In the execution of his commission, Mr. John Wesley wrote to him very frequently. The following are extracts from some of his letters on this occasion.

July 17. "I fear for C. S—— and J. C—— more and more. I have heard they frequently and bitterly rail against the church."—On this Mr. Charles Wesley puts the following query: "What assurance can we have, that they will not forsake it, at least when we are dead? Ought we to admit any man for a preacher, till we can trust his invariable attachment to the church?"

July 20. "The societies both must and shall maintain the preachers we send among them, or I will preach among them no more. The least that I can say to any of these preachers, is, 'Give yourself wholly to the work, and you shall have food to eat, and raiment to put on.' And I cannot see that any preacher is called to any people, who will not thus maintain him. Almost everything depends on you and me: let nothing damp or hinder us: only let us be alive, and put forth all our strength."

July 24. "As to the preachers, my counsel is, not to check the young ones without strong necessity. If we lay some aside, we must have a supply; and of the two, I prefer grace before gifts."—Mr. Charles puts a query. "Are not both indispensably necessary? Has not the cause suffered, in Ireland especially, through the insufficiency—of the preachers? Should we not first regulate, reform, and bring into discipline, the preachers we have, before we look for more? Should we not also watch and labor, to prevent the mischiefs which the discarded preachers may occasion?"

July 27. "What is it, that has eaten out the heart of half our preachers, particularly those in Ireland? Absolutely idleness; their not being constantly employed. I see it plainer and plainer. Therefore I beg you will inquire of each, 'How do you spend your time from morning to evening?' And give him his choice, 'Either follow your trade, or resolve before God, to spend the same hours in reading, &c. which you used to spend in working.'"

August 3. "I heartily concur with you, in dealing with all (not only with disorderly walkers, but also) triflers, *μαλακας, πολυπραγμονας*, the effeminate and busybodies, as with M. F——. I spoke to one this morning, so that I was even amazed at myself."

August 8. "We must have forty itinerant preachers, or drop some of our societies. You cannot so well judge of this, without seeing the letters I receive from all parts."

* Vol. i. page 211.

August 15. "If our preachers do not, nor will not, spend all their time in study and saving souls, they must be employed close in other work, or perish."

August 17. "C. S—— pleads for a kind of aristocracy, and says you and I, should do nothing without the consent of all the preachers; otherwise we govern arbitrarily, to which they cannot submit. Whence is this?"

August 24. "O that you and I, may arise and stand upright! I quite agree with you: let us have but six, so we are all one. I have sent one more home to his work. We may trust God to send forth more laborers; only be not unwilling to receive them, when there is reasonable proof that he has sent them."

August 21, Mr. Wesley wrote thus to a friend. "I see plainly the spirit of Ham if not of Corah, has fully possessed several of our preachers. So much the more freely and firmly, do I acquiesce in the determination of my brother, 'That it is far better for us to have ten, or six preachers who are alive to God, sound in the faith, and of one heart with us and with one another, than fifty of whom we have no such assurance.'"

In August, Mr. Charles Wesley wrote to his brother under great oppression of mind, and in very strong language. Wherever he saw some things wrong, his fears suggested to him that there might be many more which he did not see; and the natural warmth of his temper, led him to use expressions abundantly more severe than the case required. But the preachers against whom he had no material charge, but want of qualifications for their office, had nothing more to do, than write to Mr. John Wesley, a letter of humiliation and entire submission, and the matter was settled with him, and he would give them fresh encouragement. This conduct of Mr. John Wesley, made his brother appear as an enemy to the preachers, and himself as their protector and friend; which was another means of weakening the union that had long subsisted between them.

Being returned to London, the two brothers went down to Shoreham, in November, and talked the matter over in the presence of Mr. Perronet. They both expressed their entire satisfaction in the end which each had in view; namely, the glory of God, and the salvation of souls. They both acknowledged their sincerity in desiring union between themselves, as the means to that end; and after much conversation, they both agreed to act in concert with respect to the preachers, so that neither of them should admit or refuse any, but such as both admitted or refused.—About six weeks afterwards, they were at Shoreham again, and then signed the following articles of agreement:

"With regard to the preachers, we agree,

1. "That none shall be permitted to preach in any of our societies, till he be examined, both as to his grace and gifts; at least by the

assistant, who sending word to us, may by our answer admit him a *local* preacher.

2. "That such preacher be not immediately taken from his trade, but be exhorted to follow it with all diligence.

3. "That no person shall be received as a *travelling* preacher, or be taken from his trade, by either of us alone, but by both of us conjointly, giving him a note under both our hands.

4. "That neither of us will re-admit a travelling preacher laid aside, without the consent of the other.

5. "That if we should disagree in our judgment, we will refer the matter to Mr. Perronet.

6. "That we will entirely be patterns of all we expect from every preacher; particularly of zeal, diligence, and punctuality in the work: by constantly preaching and meeting the society; by visiting yearly, Ireland, Cornwall, and the north; and in general by superintending the whole work, and every branch of it, with all the strength which God shall give us. We agree to the above written, till this day next year, in the presence of Mr. Perronet.

"JOHN WESLEY,

"CHARLES WESLEY."*

Mr. John Wesley was prevailed upon, with some difficulty, to sign these articles. But though he did at length sign them, they produced no good effect. Mr. Wesley would not submit to any control in admitting preachers into the connexion, in appointing them to the different circuits, or in governing the societies. It appears to me, that, after the first difference with his brother, who disappointed his intended marriage, he made up his mind not to suffer either a superior or an equal in these respects. From that time he seemed determined to be, *aut Cæsar aut nihil*. Mr. Charles, perceiving his brother's determination, and finding that the preachers became more and more prejudiced against him, thought it most prudent to withdraw from the active situation he had hitherto held amongst them; reserving to himself, however, the right of speaking his mind freely to his brother in a friendly correspondence, on various occasions through the remaining part of life.

About this time Mr. Wesley received a letter from the Reverend Mr. Milner, who had been at Chester, and writes as follows, on the temper of the bishop towards the Methodists. "The bishop," says he, "I was told, was exceeding angry at my late excursion into the north in your company. But found his lordship in much better temper than I was bid to expect by my brother Graves, who was so prudent, that he would not go with one so obnoxious to the bishop's displeasure, and all the storm of anger fell upon him. When he told

* This and several other articles that will be inserted in this volume, have been transcribed from Mr. Charles Wesley's papers written in short-hand; which were put into my hands after the first volume was published.

me how he had been treated, for speaking in your defence, I was fully persuaded all the bitterness was past, and accordingly found it.—I told his lordship that God was with you of a truth; and he seemed pleased with the relation of the conversion of the barber at Bolton: and with your design of answering Taylor's book on Original Sin.—I have made no secret of your manner of proceeding, to any with whom I have conversed, since I had the happiness of being in your company. And to the bishop I was very particular in telling him, what an assembly of worshippers there is at Newcastle: how plainly the badge of Christianity, *love*, is there to be seen. When his lordship talked about order, I begged leave to observe that I had nowhere seen such a want of it, as in his own cathedral; the preacher so miserably at a loss, that the children took notice of it: and the choristers so rude, as to be talking and thrusting one another with their elbows. At last I told him, there was need of some extraordinary messengers from God, to call us back to the doctrines of the reformation; for I did not know one of my brethren in Lancashire, that would give the church's definition of faith, and stand to it.—And alas, I had sad experience of the same falling away in Cheshire; for one of his son's curates would not let me preach for him because of that definition of faith."

In the ensuing year, Mr. Wesley continued his labors and travels, with the same vigor and diligence, through various parts of England and Ireland. February, 1753, he makes the following observations. "I now looked over Mr. Prince's history. What an amazing difference is there, in the manner wherein God has carried on his work in England, and in America! There above an hundred of the established clergy, men of age and experience, and of the greatest note for sense and learning in those parts, are zealously engaged in the work. Here, almost the whole body of aged, experienced, learned clergy, are zealously engaged against it: and few but a handful of raw, young men engaged in it, without name, learning, or eminent sense! And yet by that large number of honorable men, the work seldom flourished above six months at a time, and then followed a lamentable and general decay, before the next revival of it: whereas that which God hath wrought by these despised instruments, has continually increased for fifteen years together: and at whatever time it has declined in any one place, it has more eminently flourished in others."

In April, he set out again for Scotland; not indeed for Musselborough, but to Glasgow, to which place he was invited by the pious and laborious Mr. Gillies, minister at the college-kirk. He staid here five days, preaching to very large and attentive congregations. Soon after he left Glasgow, Mr. Gillies wrote to him as follows:—"The singing of hymns here, meets with greater opposition than I expected. Serious people are much divided. Those of better understanding and education, are silent; but many others are so prejudiced, especially

at the singing publicly, that they speak openly against it, and look upon me as left to do a very wrong or sinful thing. I beg your advice, whether to answer them only by continuing in the practice of the thing, with such as have freedom to join, looking to the Lord for a blessing upon his own ordinance: or, if I should publish a sheet of arguments from reason, and Scripture, and the example of the godly.—Your experience of the most effectual way of dealing with people's prejudices, makes your advice on this head of the greater importance.

“I bless the Lord for the benefit and comfort of your acquaintance: for your important assistance in my Historical Collections, and for your edifying conversation and sermons in this place. May our gracious God prosper you wherever you are. O my dear sir, pray for your brother, that I may be employed in doing something for the advancement of his glory, who has done so much for me, and who is my only hope.”

In July, after one of the preachers had been there for some time, Mr. Wesley crossed over from Portsmouth to the Isle of Wight. From Cowes, they went forward to Newport, the chief town of the Isle. Here they found a little society in tolerable order; several of whom had found peace with God, and walked in the light of his countenance. At half an hour after six he preached in the market-place to a numerous congregation: but many of them were remarkably ill-behaved. The children made such noise: and many grown persons were talking aloud most of the time he was preaching. “There was,” says Mr. Wesley, “a large congregation again at five in the morning: and every person therein, seemed to know that this was the word whereby God would judge him in the last day. In the evening the congregation was more numerous, and far more serious than the night before; only one drunken man made a little disturbance, but the mayor ordered him to be taken away. In October, I visited them again, and spent three or four days with much comfort; finding those who had before professed to find peace, had walked suitably to their profession.”

To know the whole of a man's character, it is not sufficient to view him as he always appears before the public; we wish to see him in his more retired moments, and particularly in his private correspondence. The two following letters will show Mr. Wesley's temper in answering charges that were privately brought against him, either from prejudice or misapprehension. “You give,” says he, “five reasons why the Reverend Mr. P. will come no more amongst us: 1. ‘Because we despise the ministers of the Church of England.’—This I flatly deny. I am answering letters this very post, which bitterly blame me for just the contrary. 2. ‘Because so much backbiting, and evil-speaking is suffered amongst our people.’—It is not *suffered*: all possible means are used, both to prevent and remove it.

3. 'Because I, who have written so much against hoarding up money, have put out seven hundred pounds to interest.'—I never put sixpence out to interest since I was born; nor had I ever one hundred pounds together, my own, since I came into the world. 4. 'Because our lay-preachers have told many stories of my brother and me.'—If they did I am sorry for them: when I hear the particulars I can answer, and perhaps make those ashamed who believed them. 5. 'Because we did not help a friend in distress.'—We did help him as far as we were able. 'But we might have made his case known to Mr. G—, lady H—, &c.' So we did more than once; but we could not pull money from them whether they would or no. Therefore these reasons are of no weight.—You conclude with praying that God would remove pride and malice from amongst us. Of pride I have too much; of malice I have none: however the prayer is good and I thank you for it."

The other letter from which I shall give an extract, was written apparently to a gentleman of some rank and influence. "Some time since," says Mr. Wesley, "I was considering what you said, concerning the want of a plan in our societies. There is a good deal of truth in this remark. For though we have a plan, as to our spiritual economy (the several branches of which are particularly recited in the plain account of the people called Methodists) yet it is certain, we have barely the first outlines of a plan with regard to our temporal concerns. The reason is, I had no design for several years, to concern myself with temporals at all: and when I began to do this, it was wholly and solely with a view to relieve, not employ, the poor; except now and then, with respect to a small number; and even this I found was too great a burden for me, as requiring more money, more time, and more thought, than I could possibly spare. I say, than I could possibly spare: for the whole weight lay on me. If I left it to others, it surely came to nothing. They wanted either understanding, or industry, or love, or patience, to bring any thing to perfection.

"Thus far I thought it needful to explain myself with regard to the economy of our society. I am still to speak of your case, of my own, and of some who are dependent upon me.

"I do not recollect, for I kept no copy of my last, that I charged you with want of humility, or meekness. Doubtless these may be found in the most splendid palaces. But did they ever move a man to build a splendid palace? Upon what motive you did this, I know not: but you are to answer it to God, not to me.

"If your soul is as much alive to God, if your thirst after pardon and holiness is as strong, if you are as dead to the desire of the eye and the pride of life, as you were six or seven years ago, I rejoice; if not, I pray God you may; and then you will know how to value a real friend.

"With regard to myself, you do well to warn me against 'popularity, a thirst of power, and of applause; against envy, producing a

seeming contempt for the conveniences or grandeur of this life ; against an affected humility ; against sparing from myself to give to others, from no other motive than ostentation.’ I am not conscious to myself that this is my case. However, the warning is always friendly ; and it is always seasonable, considering how deceitful my heart is, and how many the enemies that surround me.—What follows I do not understand. You behold me in the ditch, wherein you helped, though innocently, to cast me, and with a *levitical* pity, ‘ passing by on the other side.’—‘ He and you, sir, have not any merit, though Providence should permit all these sufferings to work together for my good.’—I do not comprehend one line of this, and therefore cannot plead either guilty, or not guilty.—I presume, they are some that are dependent on me, ‘ Who, you say, keep not the commandments of God ; who show a repugnance to serve and obey ; who are as full of pride and arrogance, as of filth and nastiness ; who do not pay lawful debts, nor comply with civil obligations ; who make the waiting on the officers of religion, a plea for sloth and idleness ; who after I had strongly recommended them, did not perform their moral duty, but increased the number of those incumbrances which they forced on you, against your will.’—To this, I can only say, 1. I know not whom you mean ; I am not certain that I can so much as guess at one of them. 2. Whoever they are, had they followed my instructions, they would have acted in a quite different manner. 3. If you will tell me them by name, I will renounce all fellowship with them.”—This letter gives us a pleasing view of the command Mr. Wesley had acquired over his own temper ; nothing but kindness and civility appear in it ; there is no keen retort for any charge brought against himself ; and nothing but tender concern for those who had not acted worthily of the character which he had given them.

October 19, Mr. Wesley returned to London, and the next day found himself out of order. In a short time his complaint put on the appearance of an ague. Before he was perfectly recovered, he once or twice caught cold, and was presently threatened with a rapid consumption. November 26, Dr. Fothergill told him he must not stay in town one day longer: that if any thing would do him good, it must be the country air, with rest, ass’s milk, and riding daily. In consequence of this advice he retired to Lewisham. Here, not knowing how it might please God to dispose of him, and wishing “ to prevent vile panegyrick ” in case of death, he wrote as follows :

“ Here lieth

The body of John Wesley,

A brand plucked out of the burning :

Who died of a consumption in the fifty-first year of his age.

Not leaving, after his debts are paid, ten pounds behind him :

Praying,

God be merciful to me an unprofitable servant ! ”

“He ordered that this, if any inscription, should be placed on his tomb-stone.”

January 1, 1754, he returned to London, and the next day set out for the Hot Wells, near Bristol, to drink the water. On the 6th, he began writing notes on the New Testament; “A work,” says he, “I should scarce ever have attempted, had I not been so ill as not to be able to travel or preach, and yet so well as to be able to read and write.”—In April, he returned to London, and immediately retired to Paddington. Here he observes, “In my hours of walking, I read Dr. Calamy’s Abridgment of Mr. Baxter’s Life.* What a scene is opened here! In spite of all the prejudice of education, I could not but see, that the poor Nonconformists had been used without either justice or mercy: and that many of the Protestant bishops of King Charles, had neither more religion nor humanity, than the Popish

* Richard Baxter, an eminent divine among the Nonconformists, was born at Rowton in Shropshire, November 12, 1615. He distinguished himself by his exemplary life, his pacific and moderate principles, and his numerous writings. Upon the opening of the long parliament, he was chosen vicar of Kidderminster. When Oliver Cromwell was made Protector, he would by no means comply with his measures, though he preached once before him. He came to London just before the deposing of Richard Cromwell, and preached before the parliament, the day before they voted the return of King Charles II. who, upon his restoration, appointed him one of his chaplains in ordinary. He assisted at the Conference in the Savoy, as one of the commissioners for stating the fundamentals in religion, and then drew up a reformed Liturgy. He was offered the bishoprick of Hereford; but this he refused, desiring no higher preferment than to be continued the minister of Kidderminster. He did not obtain, however, his humble request, being not permitted to preach there, above twice or thrice after the restoration. In 1662, Mr. Baxter was married to Margaret Charleton, the daughter of Francis Charleton, Esq. of the county of Salop, who was esteemed one of the best justices of the peace in the county. She was a woman of great piety, and fully entered into her husband’s views of religion. In 1682, he was seized for coming within five miles of a corporation: and in the reign of King James II. he was committed to the King’s Bench prison, and tried before the infamous Jeffries for his paraphrase on the New Testament, which, in the true spirit of the times, was called a *scandalous* and *seditions* book against the government. He continued in prison two years, when he was discharged, and had his fine remitted by the king. He died in December, 1691.

Mr. Baxter was honored with the friendship of some of the greatest and best men in the kingdom; as the earl of Balcarras, lord chief justice Hales, Dr. Tillotson, &c. He wrote above one hundred and twenty books, and had above sixty written against him. The former, however, were greatly superior to the latter, since Dr. Barrow, an excellent judge, says, that “His practical writings were never mended, his controversial seldom refuted.”

Mr. Granger says, “Richard Baxter was a man famous for weakness of body and strength of mind; for having the strongest sense of religion himself, and exciting a sense of it in the thoughtless and profligate. He spoke, disputed, and wrote with ease; and discovered the same intrepidity, when he reproved Cromwell and expostulated with Charles II. as when he preached to a congregation of mechanics. He was just the same man before he went into a prison, while he was in it, and when he came out of it. This is a very imperfect sketch of Mr. Baxter’s character: men of his size are not to be drawn in miniature.” Among his most famous works were, 1. The Saint’s Everlasting Rest. 2. Call to the unconverted, of which twenty thousand were sold in one year; and it was translated, not only into all the European tongues, but into the Indian. 3. Poor Man’s Family Book. 4. Dying Thoughts. 5. A Paraphrase on the New Testament. His practical works have been printed in four volumes, folio.

bishops of Queen Mary.”—On reading Mr. Baxter’s history of the councils, Mr. Wesley uses very strong words indeed. “It is utterly astonishing,” says he, “and would be wholly incredible, but that his vouchers are beyond all exception. What a company of execrable wretches have they been (one cannot give them a milder title) who have, almost in every age since St. Cyprian, taken upon them to govern the Church! How has one council been perpetually cursing another; and delivering all over to satan, whether predecessors or cotemporaries who did not implicitly receive their determinations, though generally trifling, sometimes false, and frequently unintelligible, or self-contradictory! Surely Mahometanism was let loose to reform the Christians! I know not, but Constantinople has gained by the change.”—It is natural to observe here what the history of mankind uniformly shows, that, where the people have no balance of power in the government of the church, or of religious societies, to be used as a check against any undue influence of their teachers, the ministers, or preachers of the gospel, become in the end haughty, tyrannical, and intolerant; and their councils, assemblies, or conferences, degenerate into mere combinations against the natural rights and liberties of those over whom they assume any authority.

May 6, 1755, the Conference began at Leeds. “The point,” says Mr. Wesley, “on which we desired all the preachers to speak their minds at large, was, whether we ought to separate from the church? What was advanced on one side or the other, was seriously and calmly considered: and on the third day we were all fully agreed in that general conclusion, That whether it was lawful or not, it was now ways expedient.”

On the 13th, he rode on to Newcastle, where he did not find things in the order he expected. “Many,” says he, “were on the point of leaving the church, which some had done already; and as they supposed on my authority! O how much discord is caused by one jarring string! How much trouble by one man, who does not walk by the same rule, and agree in the same judgment with his brethren.”—It appears from these words, that some unjustifiable arts had already been made use of, to unsettle the minds of the people. How infectious is such a disease! Yet I hope it has not become epidemic.

Mr. Wesley proceeds. “August 6, I mentioned to our congregation in London, a means of increasing serious religion, which had been frequently practised by our forefathers, the joining in a covenant to serve God with all our heart and with all our soul. I explained this for several mornings following; and on Friday many of us kept a fast unto the Lord, beseeching him to give us wisdom and strength, that we might ‘promise unto the Lord our God and keep it.’ On Monday at six in the evening we met for that purpose, at the French church in Spitalfields. After I had recited the tenor of the covenant proposed, in the words of that blessed man, Richard

Allen, all the people stood up, in token of assent, to the number of about eighteen hundred. Such a night I scarce ever knew before. Surely the fruit of it shall remain forever."—The covenant has been renewed once every year, I believe, since this period.

January, 1756. The general expectation of public calamities in the ensuing year, spread a general seriousness over the nation. "We endeavored," says Mr. Wesley, "in every part of the kingdom, to avail ourselves of the apprehensions which we frequently found it was impossible to remove, in order to make them conducive to a nobler end, to that 'fear of the Lord which is the beginning of wisdom.' And at this season I wrote, 'An Address to the Clergy,' which, considering the situation of public affairs, I judged would be more seasonable, and more easily borne, at this time than at any other."—February 6, "The fast-day was a glorious day, every church in the city was more than full: and a solemn seriousness sat on every face. Surely God heareth the prayer: and there will yet be a 'lengthening of our tranquillity.'—Even the Jews observed this day with a peculiar solemnity. The form of prayer which was used in their synagogue, began, 'Come and let us return unto the Lord; for he hath torn and he will heal us;' and concluded with those remarkable words: 'Incline the heart of our sovereign lord King George, as well as the hearts of his lords and counsellors, to use us kindly, and all our brethren the children of Israel: that in his days and in our days we may see the restoration of Judah, and that Israel may dwell in safety, and the Redeemer may come to Zion. May it be thy will! And we all say Amen.'"

In the latter end of March, he visited Ireland again, and after seeing the societies in Leinster and Munster, went with Mr. Walsh into the province of Connaught. July 19, he first set foot into the province of Ulster. But several of the preachers had been laboring in various parts of it for some years, and had seen much fruit of their labors. Many sinners had been convinced of the error of their ways; many, truly converted to God: and a considerable number of these, had united together in order to strengthen each other's hands in God.

August 25, Mr. Wesley came to Bristol, where he found about fifty preachers, who had come from various parts of the country to hold a Conference, which was opened the next day. The rules of the society, the band rules, and the rules of Kingswood School, were severally read and re-considered, and it was agreed to observe and enforce them.

The first and leading principle in the economy of Methodism, from its commencement to the present time, was not to form the people into a separate party; but to leave every individual member of the society at full liberty to continue in his former religious connexion: nay, leaving every one under a kind of necessity of doing so, for the ordinance of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Having established

their societies on this principle, the Methodists became a kind of middle link between all the religious parties in the nation, gently drawing them nearer together by uniting them all in the interests of experimental religion and scriptural holiness. They formed a kind of central point, from which the rays of gospel light issued forth, not in one direction alone, to eradicate only one point of their circumference, but in all directions, equally enlightening every part of their periphery. But two or three of the preachers, who had acquired some influence with the people, had for some time been dissatisfied with this middle situation; the being no party, but standing in an equal relation to all, as *fellow-helpers to the truth*. We may observe, that this dissatisfaction originated with a few ambitious preachers, and from them spread, like a contagious disease, to the people. This was the case at first, and has always been the case since, wherever the people have desired any alteration in the original constitution of the Methodist societies. The method of proceeding, even to the present time, to effect their purpose, is rather curious, and shows to what wretched means men will sometimes resort, to support a bad cause. For as soon as these preachers had by various arts, influenced a few persons in any society to desire to receive the Lord's Supper from them, they pleaded this circumstance as a reason why the innovation should take place; pretending they only wished to satisfy the desires of the people, not their own restless ambition. As a vast majority in these societies were members of the Church of England, so the forming of the Methodists into a separate party, was called a separating them from the church; though it evidently implied a change in their relative situation to all denominations of Dissenters, as much as to the church. The clamor, however, for a separation from the church, had been raised so high by a few of the preachers, that the subject was fully discussed for two or three days together, at this Conference; and Mr. Wesley observes, "My brother and I closed the Conference by a solemn declaration of our purpose never to separate from the church."

The regular clergy, who had embraced the leading doctrines of the Methodists, generally disapproved of lay-preachers, and of the plan of itinerancy; fearing, with the rest of the clergy, that in the end a large rent would be made from the established church. In September, Mr. Wesley received a letter on this subject from the reverend and pious Mr. Walker of Truro, pressing him to get the ablest preachers ordained, and to fix the rest in different societies, not as preachers but as readers, and thus break up the itinerant plan. Mr. Wesley answered, "I have one point in view, to promote, so far as I am able, vital, practical religion; and by the grace of God, to beget, preserve, and increase, the life of God in the souls of men. On this single principle I have hitherto proceeded, and taken no step but in subserviency to it. With this view, when I found it to be absolutely

necessary for the continuance of the work which God had begun in many souls (which their *regular pastors* generally used all possible means to destroy) I permitted several of their brethren, whom I believed God had called thereto, and qualified for the work, to comfort, exhort, and instruct those who were athirst for God, or who walked in the light of his countenance. But as the persons so qualified were few, and those who wanted their assistance very many, it followed that most of them were obliged to travel continually from place to place; and this occasioned several regulations from time to time, which were chiefly made at our Conferences.

“So great a blessing has from the beginning attended the labors of these itinerants, that we have been more and more convinced every year, of the more than lawfulness of this proceeding. And the inconveniences, most of which we foresaw from the very first, have been both fewer and smaller than we expected.—But the question is, ‘How may these (preachers) be settled on such a footing, as one would wish they might be after my death;’ it is a weighty point, and has taken up many of my thoughts for several years: but I know nothing yet. The steps I am now to take are plain; I see broad light shining upon them; but the other part of the prospect I cannot see: clouds and darkness rest upon it.

“Your *general* advice on this head, ‘To follow my own conscience, without any regard to consequences or prudence, so called, is unquestionably right. And it is a rule which I have closely followed for many years, and hope to follow to my life’s end. The first of your *particular* advice is, ‘To keep in full view the interests of Christ’s church in general, and of practical religion; not considering the Church of England, or the cause of Methodism, but as subordinate thereto.’ This advice I have punctually observed from the beginning, as well as at our late Conference. You advise, 2. ‘To keep in view also, the unlawfulness of a separation from the Church of England.’ To this likewise I agree. It cannot be lawful to separate from it, unless it be unlawful to continue in it. You advise, 3. ‘Fully to declare myself on this head, and to suffer no dispute concerning it.’ The very same thing I wrote to my brother from Ireland: and we have declared ourselves without reserve.—Your last advice is, ‘That as many of our preachers as are fit for it, be ordained; and that the others be fixed to certain societies, not as preachers, but as readers or inspectors.’—But is that which you propose a better way (than our itinerant plan)? This should be coolly and calmly considered.

“If I mistake not, there are now in the county of Cornwall, about four and thirty of these little societies, part of whom now experience the love of God; part are more or less earnestly seeking it. Four preachers, Peter Jacq, Thomas Johnson, W. Crabb, and Will. Atwood, design for the ensuing year, partly to call other sinners to repentance; but chiefly to feed and guide those few feeble sheep: to forward them,

as the ability which God giveth, in vital, practical religion. Now suppose we can effect that P. Jaco, and T. Johnson, be ordained and settled in the curacies of Buryan, and St. Just: and suppose W. Crabb, and W. Atwood, fix at Launceston or the Dock, as readers and inspectors; will this answer the end which I have in view, so well as travelling through the country?

“It will not answer so well, even with regard to those societies with whom P. Jaco, and T. Johnson, have settled. Be their talents ever so great, they will ere long, grow dead themselves, and so will most of those who hear them. I know, were I myself to preach one whole year in one place, I should preach both myself and most of my congregation asleep. Nor can I believe, it was ever the will of our Lord, that any congregation should have only one teacher. We have found by long and constant experience, that a frequent change of teachers is best. This preacher has one talent, that another. No one whom I ever yet knew, has all the talents which are needful for beginning, continuing, and perfecting the work of grace in a whole congregation.

“But suppose this would better answer the end with regard to those two societies, would it answer in those where W. Atwood, and W. Crabb, were settled as inspectors or readers? First, who shall feed them with the milk of the word? The ministers of their parishes? Alas, they cannot: they themselves neither know, nor live, nor teach the gospel. These readers? Can then, either they, or I, or you, always find something to read to our congregation, which will be as exactly adapted to their wants, and as much blessed to them as our preaching? and there is another difficulty still; what authority have I to forbid their doing what, I believe, God has called them to do? I apprehend, indeed, that there ought, if possible, to be both an outward and inward call to this work: yet if one of the two be supposed wanting, I had rather want the outward than the inward call.

“But waving this, and supposing these four societies to be better provided for than they were before; what becomes of the other thirty? Will they prosper as well when they are left as sheep without a shepherd? The experiment has been tried again and again; and always with the same event: even the strong in faith grew weak and faint; many of the weak made shipwreck of the faith; the awakened fell asleep; and sinners, changed for a while, returned as a dog to his vomit. And so, by our lack of service, many souls perished for whom Christ died. Now had we willingly withdrawn our service from them, by voluntarily settling in one place, what account of this could we have given to the great Shepherd of all our souls? I cannot therefore see, how any of those four preachers, or any others in like circumstances, can ever, while they have health and strength, ordained or unordained, fix in one place without a grievous wound to their own conscience, and damage to the general work of God.”

On the same day, that he wrote the above letter, he also wrote to

Mr. Norton, who, in a letter written about a week before, had charged him with 1. "Self-inconsistency, in tolerating lay-preaching, and not tolerating lay-administering: and 2. With showing a spirit of persecution, in denying his brethren the liberty of acting, as well as thinking, according to their own conscience."

With regard to the first, Mr. Wesley allowed the charge, but denied the consequence. He declared, that he acted on the same principle, in tolerating the one, and in prohibiting the other. "My principle," said he, "is this, I submit to every ordinance of man, wherever I do not conceive there is an absolute necessity for acting contrary to it. Consistently with this, I do tolerate lay-preaching, because I conceive there is an absolute necessity for it, inasmuch as were it not, thousands of souls would perish; yet I do not tolerate lay-administering, because I do not conceive there is any such necessity for it."

With regard to the second, Mr. Wesley observes, "I again allow the fact; but deny the consequence. I mean, I allow the fact thus far: some of our preachers who are not ordained, think it quite right to administer the Lord's supper, and believe it would do much good. I think it quite wrong, and believe it would do much hurt. Hereupon I say, I have no right over your conscience, nor you over mine; therefore both you and I must follow our own conscience. You believe, it is a duty to administer: do so, and herein follow your own conscience. I verily believe it is a sin: which consequently, I dare not tolerate: and herein I follow mine. Yet this is no persecution, were I to separate from our society, those who practise what I believe is contrary to the word and destructive of the work of God."

In December, Mr. Wesley wrote to a friend as follows: "I do not see that diocesan episcopacy is necessary, but I do, that it is highly expedient. But whether it were or no, the spirit shown in those verses, is wrong from end to end.

"Neither J. E—— nor any other separatist, can ever be expected to own prejudice, pride, or interest, to be his motive. Nevertheless, I do and must blame every one of them, for the act of separating. Afterwards, I leave them to God.

"The Apostles had not the lordships, or the revenues, but they had the office of diocesan bishops. But let that point sleep: we have things to think of, which are, *magis ad nos*. Keep from proselyting others; and keep your opinion till doomsday; stupid, self-inconsistent, unprimitive, and unscriptural as it is.

"I have spoken my judgment concerning lay-administering, at large, both to C. P—— and N. Norton. I went as far as I could with a safe conscience. I must follow my conscience, and they their own. They who dissuade people from attending the church and sacrament, do certainly, 'draw them from the church.'"

Mr. Wesley's travels and labors of love, in preaching the gospel of peace through most parts of the three kingdoms, were continued with

the same unremitting diligence, while the duties of his situation in some other respects, increased every year upon him. New societies were frequently formed in various places; which naturally called for an increase of preachers. These, however, were more easily procured, than a stranger would imagine. The class and band meetings were a fruitful nursery, where the most zealous and pious young men soon grew up to the requisite standard, to be transplanted into a higher situation, among the local or itinerant preachers. But as the body increased, it became a more difficult task to regulate its economy, so as to preserve an equilibrium through all its parts, on which the health and vigor of the whole depended. The body became like a large machine, whose movements were exceedingly complex: and it depended on Mr. Wesley, not only to give the necessary impulse to put the whole in motion, but also everywhere to govern and direct its motions to the purposes intended. This required great and continued attention, and a very extensive correspondence both with preachers and people through the whole connexion. All this, however, he performed, by allotting to every hour of the day, wherever he was, its due proportion of labor.—From the present year, I find little more than a recurrence of circumstances similar to those already related, till we come to the year 1760; when religious experience, or at least the profession of it, began to assume an appearance among the Methodists, in some respects quite new. The doctrine of justification, from 1738, had always been well understood among them; and from the time Mr. Wesley preached his sermon on the ‘circumcision of the heart,’ in 1733, before he understood the nature of justification, he had always held the doctrine of christian perfection; which he explained by, loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves: that a person in this state felt nothing, in all situations, but the pure love of God, and perfect submission to his will; and nothing but benevolence, or good-will to men. He never called this a state of sinless perfection, because he believed there might still be errors in conduct arising from ignorance, which yet were consistent with pure love to God, and good-will to men. He did not suppose, that any man could stand for one moment accepted of God, but by faith in Christ Jesus, through whom alone, his person and his actions, in the highest state of perfection attainable in this life, can be accepted of God.

But, though Mr. Wesley had so long held the doctrine of christian perfection, he had not always held that this state might be attained in one moment; much less that a person might attain it in his novitiate: nor do I know that there were any professors of it before this time, except when death was approaching. In the beginning of this year, however, there being a great revival of a religious concern among the societies in Yorkshire, several professed, that at once, during prayer, their hearts were cleansed from all sin: that they were cleansed from all unrighteousness, or perfected in love: all which,

were with them synonymous phrases. "Here," says Mr. Wesley, began that glorious work of sanctification, which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years. But from time to time it spread, first through various parts of Yorkshire, afterwards in London; then through most parts of England: next through Dublin, Limerick, and all the South and West of Ireland. And wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches. Many were convinced of sin; many justified; and many backsliders healed."

We may observe that Mr. Wesley, believing these professors of an instantaneous deliverance from all sin were sincere, gave full credit to their report; and upon this, and the concurring testimony of others which soon followed, he seems to have built his doctrine of an instantaneous attainment of christian perfection. Against the doctrine itself, as explained above, there does not seem to lie any just objection: but this instantaneous manner of attaining perfection in the Christian temper, seems to have no foundation in Scripture: it even appears contrary to reason, and to the constitution and order which God has established through all animated nature, where we see no instance of any thing arriving at perfection in a moment. And though there can be no doubt but some of those who made profession of this happy state were both sincere and deeply pious, perhaps beyond most of their brethren, yet there seems just reason to affirm they were mistaken in the judgment they formed of their own attainments.

In the spring and summer of this year, Mr. Wesley spent several months in Ireland. He staid about twenty days in Dublin, and then visited most parts of the kingdom. Dr. Barnard, then Bishop of Derry, was a warm friend to religion, and being convinced of Mr. Wesley's sincerity in his indefatigable labors to promote it, had a very sincere regard for him. The bishop being disappointed in not seeing him when in Dublin, sent him the following letter.

"REVEREND SIR,

"It would have given me a very sincere pleasure to have seen you during your stay in Dublin; and I am concerned to find, that your having entertained any doubt of it, deprived me of that satisfaction. Indeed I did not expect your stay would have been so short.

"Whether your expression, of our meeting no more on this side of eternity, refers to your design of quitting your visits to Ireland, or to any increase of bodily weakness, I do not read it without tender regret: however, that must be submitted to the disposal of Providence.—I pray God to bless you, and supply every want, and sanctify every suffering.

I am, Reverend Sir,

Your loving brother and servant,

W. DERRY."

In March, 1761, Mr. Wesley set out for the North. In these journies he generally took a very large circuit, passing through the principal societies in most of the counties. He now visited several parts of Scotland, as far as Aberdeen: was favorably received, and, in England, especially, saw the work in which he was engaged every where increasing. In the beginning of July, he came to York, on his return, and was desired to call on a poor prisoner in the castle. "I had formerly," says Mr. Wesley, "occasion to take notice of an hideous monster, called a Chancery Bill: I now saw the fellow to it, called a Declaration. The plain fact was this. Some time since, a man who lived near Yarm, assisted others in running some brandy. His share was worth near four pounds. After he had wholly left off that bad work, and was following his own business, that of a weaver, he was arrested, and sent to York gaol. And not long after comes down a declaration, 'That Jac. Wh—— had landed a vessel laden with brandy and geneva, at the port of London, and sold them there, whereby he was indebted to his Majesty five hundred and seventy-seven pounds, and upwards.' And to tell this worthy story, the lawyer takes up thirteen or fourteen sheets of treble stamp paper.

"O England, England! Will this reproach never be rolled away from thee? Is there any thing like this to be found, either among Papists, Turks, or Heathens? In the name of justice, mercy, and common sense, I ask, 1. Why do men lie, for lying sake? Is it only to keep their hands in? What need else of saying it was the port of London? when every one knew the brandy was landed, above three hundred miles from thence. What a monstrous contempt of truth does this show, or rather hatred to it? 2. Where is the justice of swelling four pounds, into five hundred and seventy-seven? 3. Where is the common sense, of taking up fourteen sheets to tell a story, that may be told in ten lines? 4. Where is the mercy of thus grinding the face of the poor? Thus sucking the blood of a poor beggared prisoner. Would not this be execrable villany, if the paper and writing together were only sixpence a sheet, when they have stript him already of his little all, and not left him fourteen groats in the world?"

It is certain that nothing can be fairly said in defence of some of our law proceedings. They are often absurd, highly oppressive to the subject, and disgraceful to a civilized nation. In criminal cases, how often does the indictment magnify and exaggerate both the crime and every circumstance connected with it, beyond all the bounds of truth and probability? Hence it becomes extremely difficult for jurymen to discharge their duty with a good conscience; and we seldom see punishments duly proportioned to the crimes committed. What shall we say in other cases, where the tautology and circumlocution peculiar to the language of our law, the delay of judgment in some of the courts, and the chicanery permitted through the whole proceedings, render it almost impossible for an honest subject in a middling situation, to

obtain his right against a villain, without the utmost danger of being ruined? A man who robs on the highway is hanged; but a villain who robs by means of the chicanery, delay, and expense of the law, escapes with impunity. The grievances so loudly complained of at present, appear to me, in comparison of this, like a mole-hill compared with a mountain.

The doctrine of an instantaneous attainment of christian perfection spread rapidly, and numerous professors of it almost instantly sprung up, in various parts of the kingdom. But the imprudent zeal, and rash expressions of some of the preachers concerning it, soon began to give offence. July 23, Mr. Grimshaw wrote to Mr. Wesley on the subject, and after apologizing for not attending the Conference then held at Leeds, he observes, “The disappointment is more my own loss than yours: for there are several things which have for some time been matter of so much uneasiness to me, that I thought, could they not at this time be some how accommodated, I should be obliged to recede from the connexion; which to do, would have been one of the most disagreeable things in the world to me.—I would fain live and die in this happy relation I have for many years borne, and still bear to you.

“Two of the most material points were, concerning imputed righteousness, and christian perfection. But as to the former, what you declared to be your notion of it, at Heptonstal, is so near mine that I am well satisfied. And as to the other, your resolutions in Conference are such, if John Emmot informs me right, as seem to afford me sufficient satisfaction.

“There are other matters more, but to me not of equal importance, to which, notwithstanding, I cannot be reconciled. Such as asserting, ‘a child of God to be again a child of the devil, if he give away to a temptation.—That he is a child of the devil who disbelieves the doctrine of sinless perfection.—That he is no true Christian, who has not attained to it,’ &c. &c. These are assertions very common with some of our preachers, though in my apprehension too absurd and ridiculous to be regarded, and therefore by no means of equal importance with what is above said; and yet have a tendency, as the effect has already shown, to distract and divide our societies.—You will perhaps say, ‘Why did you not admonish them? Why did you not endeavor to convince them of the error of such absurd assertions?’—In some degree I have, thought perhaps not so fully or freely as I ought or could have wished to have done: for I feared to be charged by them, perhaps secretly to yourself, with opposing them or their doctrines.—These things I mentioned to brother Lee, who declared, and I could not but believe him, that you did. and would utterly reject any such expressions. I am therefore, in these respects more easy; and shall if such occasions require, as I wish they never may, reprove and prevent them with plainness and freedom.

“*Sinless** perfection is a grating term to many of our dear brethren; even to those who are as desirous and solicitous to be truly holy in heart and life, as any perhaps of them who affect to speak in this unscriptural way. Should we not discountenance the use of it, and advise its votaries to exchange it for terms less offensive, but sufficiently expressive of true christian holiness? By this I mean (and why may I not tell you what I mean?) all that holiness of heart and life, which is literally, plainly, abundantly, taught us all over the Bible; and without which no man, however justified through faith in the righteousness of Christ, can ever expect to see the Lord.—This is that holiness, that christian perfection, that sanctification, which, without affecting strange, fulsome, offensive, unscriptural expressions and representations, I, and I dare say every true and sincere-hearted member in our societies, and I hope in all others, ardently desire and strenuously labor to attain.—This is attainable—for this therefore let us contend: to this let us diligently exhort and excite all our brethren daily; and this the more as we see the day, the happy, the glorious day approaching.

“I have only to add, that I am determined through the help of God, so far as I know, or see at present, to continue in close connexion with you, even unto death: and to be as useful as I am able, or as consistent with my parochial, and other indispensable obligations: chiefly in this round (circuit) and at times abroad; to strengthen your hands in the great and glorious work of our LORD, which you have evidently so much at heart, elaborately so much in hand, and in which, He, blessed forever be his name, has so extensively and wonderfully prospered you.”

Immediately on the receipt of this letter, before the Conference quite broke up, Mr. Wesley took an opportunity of preaching from those words, ‘In many things we offend all.’ On this occasion he observed, 1. “As long as we live, our soul is connected with the body. 2. As long as it is thus connected, it cannot think but by the help of bodily organs. 3. As long as these organs are imperfect, we are liable to mistakes, both speculative and practical: 4. Yea, and a mistake may occasion my loving a good man less than I ought; which is a defective, that is, a wrong temper. 5. For all these we need the atoning blood, as indeed for every defect or omission. Therefore, 6. All men have need to say daily, Forgive us our trespasses.”

During the following years, there was much noise throughout the societies concerning perfection: but more especially in London, where two or three persons who stood at the head of those professing to have attained that state, fell into some extravagant notions and ways of expression, more proper to be heard in Bedlam than in a religious society. One of the persons here alluded to, was George Bell, who

* It is observed above, that Mr. Wesley himself never used the term *sinless* perfection.

was favored by Mr. Maxfield; and they soon made a party in their favor.—When the plain declarations of Scripture are disregarded, or even tortured by ingenuity or a wild imagination to a false meaning, what opinions can be so absurd, either in religion or philosophy, as not to find advocates for them? But this affords no just ground of objection against scriptural Christianity, or true christian experience; any more than against sound philosophy. In the history of philosophers and of philosophy, we find opinions maintained, as absurd as the most illiterate enthusiast in religion ever published; nay as absurd as transubstantiation itself. And when religion has had the misfortune to fall under the sole direction of these philosophers, and been constrained by violence to put on their philosophic dress, she has had just cause to complain of as great an insult as ever she experienced from the most ignorant enthusiast. So little justice is there in the proud claim of reason in her present imperfect state, to assume the whole direction of our most holy religion! And so little cause has she, to triumph over the errors of a few mistaken professors of christian experience!

Mr. Wesley did not, at first, resist these extravagances with sufficient firmness; by which the persons who favored them daily increased in number. At length, however, he found it absolutely necessary to give an effectual check to the party: but now it was too late to be done, without the risk of a separation in the society. This, being the least of the two evils, accordingly took place: Mr. Maxfield withdrew from his connexion with Mr. Wesley, and carried near two hundred of the people with him.

During this contest, Mr. Wesley being at Canterbury, wrote to Mr. Maxfield, telling him very freely what he approved, and what he disapproved in his doctrine or behavior. Among a variety of other things, Mr. Wesley tells him, “I like your doctrine of perfection, or pure love.—I dislike the saying, This was not known or taught among us, till within two or three years.”—On this, I shall just observe, that the doctrine of perfection, or perfect love, was undoubtedly taught among the Methodists from the beginning: but the manner in which it was now preached, pressing the people to expect what was called the destruction of the root of sin, in one moment, was most certainly new; I can find no trace of it before the period at which I have fixed its introduction.*

* It will be proper before we proceed any further, to give a short account of that excellent man, and successful minister of Christ, the Rev. Mr. Grimshaw. He was born in September, 1708, at Brindle, six miles from Preston in Lancashire, and educated at the schools of Blackburn and Heskin, in the same county. Even then, the thoughts of death and judgment made some impression upon him. At the age of eighteen he was sent to Christ's-College in Cambridge; where bad example so carried him away, that he utterly lost all sense of seriousness. In 1731, he was ordained deacon, and seemed much affected with the importance of the ministerial office. This was increased by conversing with some serious people at Rochdale; but on his removal to Todmorden soon after, he dropped his

At this time the societies were so multiplied, and so widely spread, that they formed twenty-five extensive circuits in England, eight in Ireland, four in Scotland, and two in Wales: on which, I suppose, about ninety preachers were daily employed in propagating knowledge and christian experience, among the lower orders of the people.

March 12, Mr. Wesley left London, and on the 16th came to Bristol, where he met several serious clergymen. He observes, "I have long desired that there might be an open, avowed union, between all who preach those fundamental truths, original sin, and justification by faith, producing inward and outward holiness. But all my endeavors have been hitherto ineffectual."—In April, however, he made one more attempt to promote so desirable an union. He wrote the following letter, which after some time he sent to between thirty and forty clergymen, with the little preface annexed.

pious acquaintance, conformed to the world, followed all its diversions, and contented himself with doing his duty on Sundays.

About the year 1734, he began to think seriously again. He left off all diversions, began to catechise the young people, to preach the absolute necessity of a devout life, and to visit his parishioners, to press them to seek the salvation of their souls. At this period also, he began to pray in secret four times a day: and the God of all grace, who prepared his heart to pray, soon gave the answer to his prayer. Not indeed as he expected: not in joy or peace, but by bringing upon him strong and painful convictions of his own guilt, helplessness, and misery; by discovering to him what he did not suspect before, that his heart was deceitful and desperately wicked; and, what was more afflicting still, that all his duties and labors could not procure him pardon, or give him a title to eternal life. In this trouble he continued more than three years, not acquainting any one with the distress he suffered. But one day, in 1742, being in the utmost agony of mind, he had so strong and clear a view of Jesus Christ in his mediatorial character, that he was enabled to believe on him with the heart unto righteousness; and in a moment all his fears vanished away, and he was filled with joy unspeakable. "I was now," says he, "willing to renounce myself, and to embrace Christ for my all in all."—All this time he was an entire stranger to the people called Methodists, and also to their writings, till he came to Haworth. Mr. Grimshaw was now too happy himself in the knowledge of Christ to rest satisfied, without taking every method he thought likely, to spread the knowledge of his God and Saviour. For the sake of the very indigent, who wanted clothes to appear decent at church in the day-time, he contrived a lecture on the Sunday evenings, though he had before preached twice in the day. The next year he began a method, which he continued till death, of preaching in each of the four hamlets under his care, three times every month. By this means, the old and infirm, had the truth of God brought to their houses. The success of his labors, soon brought many persons from the neighboring parishes to attend on his ministry; and the benefit they obtained, brought upon him many earnest entreaties to come to their houses, and expound the word of God to souls as ignorant as they had been themselves. This request he did not dare to refuse; so that, while he provided abundantly for his own flock, he annually found opportunity of preaching near three hundred times, to congregations in other parts.

For a course of fifteen years, or upwards, he used to preach every week, fifteen, twenty, and sometimes thirty times, besides visiting the sick, and other occasional duties of his function. In sixteen years he was only once suspended from his labors by sickness, though he dared all weather upon the bleak mountains, and used his body with less compassion, than a merciful man would use his beast. He was exceedingly beloved by all his parishioners, many of whom could not hear his name mentioned after his death without shedding tears. Triumphant in Him who is the resurrection and the life, he died, April 7th, 1762, in the fifty-fourth year of his age, and the twenty-first of eminent usefulness.

“REVEREND SIR,

“Near two years and a half ago, I wrote the following letter. You will please to observe, 1. That I propose no more therein, than is the bounden duty of every Christian: 2. That *you* may comply with this proposal, whether any other does or not. I myself have endeavored so to do for many years, though I have been almost alone therein; and although many, the more earnestly I *talk of peace* the more zealously *make themselves ready for battle*. I am,

Reverend Sir,

Your affectionate brother,

JOHN WESLEY.”

“DEAR SIR,

“It has pleased God to give you both the will and the power to do many things for his glory, although you are often ashamed you have done so little, and wish you could do a thousand times more. This induces me to mention to you, what has been upon my mind for many years: and what I am persuaded would be much for the glory of God, if it could once be effected. And I am in great hopes it will be, if you heartily undertake it, trusting in him alone.

“Some years since God began a great work in England; but the laborers were few. At first those few were of one heart: but it was not so long. First one fell off, then another and another, till no two of us were left together in the work, besides my brother and me. This prevented much good, and occasioned much evil. It grieved our spirits, and weakened our hands. It gave our common enemies huge occasion to blaspheme. It perplexed and puzzled many sincere Christians. It caused many to draw back to perdition. It grieved the holy spirit of God.

“As laborers increased, disunion increased. Offences were multiplied. And instead of coming nearer to, they stood further and further off from each other: till at length, those who were not only brethren in Christ, but fellow-laborers in his gospel, had no more connexion or fellowship with each other, than Protestants have with Papists.

“But ought this to be? Ought not those who are united to one common head, and employed by him in one common work, to be united to each other? I speak now of those laborers, who are ministers of the Church of England. These are chiefly—Mr. Perronet, Romaine, Newton, Shirley: Mr. Downing, Jesse, Adam: Mr. Talbot, Ryland, Stillingfleet, Fletcher: Mr. Johnson, Baddeley, Andrews, Jane: Mr. Hart, Symes, Brown, Roquet: Mr. Sellon, Venn, Richardson, Burnet, Furley, Crook: Mr. Eastwood, Conyers, Bentley, King: Mr. Berridge, Hicks, G. W., J. W., C. W., John Richardson, Benjamin Colley.—Not excluding any other clergyman, who agrees in these essentials,

“I. Original sin. II. Justification by faith. III. Holiness of heart and life: provided his life be answerable to his doctrine.

“But *what union* would you desire among these? Not an union in *opinions*. They might agree or disagree, touching absolute decrees on the one hand, and perfection on the other.—Not an union in *expressions*. Those may still speak of the *imputed righteousness*, and these of the *merits of Christ*. Not an union with regard to *outward order*. Some may still remain *quite regular*; some *quite irregular*; and some *partly regular*, and *partly irregular*. But these things being as they are, as each is persuaded in his own mind, is it not a most desirable thing, that we should,

“1. Remove hindrances out of the way? Not *judge* one another, not *despise* one another, not *envy* one another? Not be *displeased* at one another’s *gifts* or *success*, even though greater than our own? Not *wait* for one another’s halting, much less *wish* for it, or *rejoice* therein?—Never *speak* disrespectfully, slightly, coldly, or unkindly of each other: never *repeat* each other’s faults, mistakes, or infirmities, much less *listen* for and *gather* them up: never say or do anything to hinder each other’s usefulness, either directly or indirectly.

“Is it not a most desirable thing, that we should, 2. Love *as brethren*? *Think well* of, and *honor* one another? *Wish* all good, all grace, all gifts, all success, yea greater than our own, to each other? *Expect* God will answer our wish, *rejoice* in every appearance thereof, and *praise* him for it? *Readily believe* good of each other, as readily as we once believed evil?—*Speak* respectfully, honorably, kindly, of each other: *defend* each other’s character: speak all the good we can of each other: recommend one another where we have influence: each *help* the other on in his work, and *enlarge* his influence by all the honest means we can.

“This is the *union* which I have long sought after. And is it not the duty of every one of us so to do? Would it not be far better for *ourselves*? A means of promoting both our holiness and happiness? Would it not remove much *guilt* from those who have been faulty in any of these instances? And much *pain* from those who have kept themselves pure? Would it not be far better for the *people*? who suffer severely from the clashing of their leaders, which seldom fail to occasion many unprofitable, yea hurtful disputes among them. Would it not be better for the poor, blind *world*, robbing them of their sport? O they cannot agree among themselves! Would it not be better for the *whole work* of God, which would then deepen and widen on every side?

“‘But it will never be: it is utterly impossible.’ Certainly it is with *men*. Who imagines *we* can do this? That it can be effected by any human power? All *nature* is against it, every infirmity, every *wrong temper* and *passion*; love of honor and praise, of power, of preëminence; anger, resentment, pride; long-contracted habit, and prejudice, lurking in ten thousand forms. The devil and his angels are against it. For if this takes place, how shall his kingdom stand?

All *the world*, all that know not God are against it, though they may seem to favor it for a season. Let us settle this in our hearts, that we may be utterly cut off from all dependence on our own strength or wisdom.

“But surely ‘with God all things are possible.’ Therefore ‘all things are possible to him that believeth.’ And this union is proposed only to them that believe, and show their faith by their works.

I am, dear sir,

Your affectionate servant,

J. W.”

Scarborough, April 19, 1764.

This letter shows Mr. Wesley’s tolerant principles in a strong light. Happy would it have been for the professors of religion, had the same spirit of brotherly-love and mutual forbearance, prevailed in the hearts of all who preached the essential doctrines of the gospel. But this was not the case: of all the clergymen to whom this desirable union was proposed, only three vouchsafed to return him an answer!

Mr. Wesley continued his travels and labors, with the usual diligence and punctuality through all the societies in Great Britain, Ireland, and Wales; and his health and strength were wonderfully preserved. In October, 1765, he observes, “I breakfasted with Mr. Whitefield, who seemed to be an old, old man, being fairly worn out in his Master’s service, though he has hardly seen fifty years. And yet it pleases God, that I, who am now in my sixty-third year, find no disorder, no weakness, no decay, no difference from what I was at five and twenty: only that I have fewer teeth, and more grey hairs!”—Soon after he adds, “Mr. Whitefield called upon me. He breathes nothing but peace and love. Bigotry, cannot stand before him, but hides its head wherever he comes.”

Mr. Wesley received sixty pounds per annum, from the society in London, which is the salary that every clergyman receives, who officiates among them. But individuals in various places frequently gave him money; legacies were sometimes left him, and the produce of his books, in the latter part of life was considerable. It is well known, however, that he hoarded nothing at the end of the year. He even contracted his expenses as much as possible, and gave the surplus to the poor, and those who might, through misfortunes, be in want. His charitable disposition may appear from the following little circumstance, which strongly points out the tender feelings of his mind, under a consciousness that he had not given in proportion to the person’s want. In November, 1766, a foreigner in distress called upon him, and gave him a Latin letter, begging some relief. Shortly after, Mr. Wesley reflecting on the case, wrote on the back of the letter, “I let him go with five shillings: I fear he is starving. Alas!”

The world has seldom seen a man of strong powers of mind, of

first-rate talents, who has not labored under some peculiar weakness, or mental infirmity; which men of little minds, capable only of observing defects, have frequently made the object of ridicule. Numerous instances might easily be produced, both among philosophers and divines. Mr. Wesley's chief weakness was, a too great readiness to credit the testimony of others, when he believed them sincere, without duly considering whether they had sufficient ability and caution to form a true judgment of the things concerning which they bore testimony. In matters, therefore, which depended wholly on the evidence of other persons, he was often mistaken. Mr. Charles Wesley, was in the opposite extreme; full of caution and suspicion. But he was fully sensible both of his own, and of his brother's weakness, and in the present year, wrote to him as follows; "When you fear the worst, your fears should be regarded: and when I hope the best, you may almost believe me.—As to *several* of our preachers, I fear with *you*, 'The salt has lost its savor.' Where is their single eye now? Their zeal, humility, and love? And what can we do with them, or for them?" And again, some years afterwards, "Your defect of mistrust, needs my excess to guard it. You cannot be taken by storm, but you may by surprise. We seem designed for each other. If we could and would be oftener together, it might be better for both.—Let us be useful in our lives, and at our death not divided."

It was owing to the weakness above mentioned, that Mr. Wesley so easily believed most of the stories he heard, concerning witchcraft and apparitions. And though this is by many deemed a subject of ridicule rather than of serious argument, yet it is but just to let Mr. Wesley plead his own cause, and assign the reasons of his faith in the persons who have stated the appearance of departed spirits as a matter of fact, of which they themselves were the witnesses. This he did in 1768. After stating, that there were several things in these appearances which he did not comprehend, he adds, "But this is with me a very slender objection. For what is it which I do not comprehend, even of the things I see daily? Truly not 'the smallest grain of sand, or spire of grass.'—What pretence have I then to deny well-attested facts, because I cannot comprehend them?"

"It is true likewise, that the English in general, and most of the men of learning in Europe, have given up all accounts of witches and apparitions, as mere old wives' fables. I am sorry for it: and I willingly take this opportunity of entering my solemn protest against this violent compliment, which so many that believe the Bible, pay to those who do not believe it. I owe them no such service. I take knowledge, these are at the bottom of the outcry which has been raised, and with such insolence spread throughout the nation in direct opposition not only to the Bible, but to the suffrage of the wisest and best of men in all ages and nations. They well know, whether

Christians know it or not, that the giving up witchcraft, is in effect giving up the Bible. And they know on the other hand, that if but one account of the intercourse of men with separate spirits be admitted, their whole castle in the air, Deism, Atheism, Materialism, falls to the ground. I know no reason therefore, why we should suffer even this weapon to be wrested out of our hands. Indeed there are numerous arguments besides, which abundantly confute their vain imaginations. But we need not be hooted out of one: neither reason or religion require this.

“One of the capital objections to all these accounts, which I have known urged over and over, is this, ‘Did you ever see an apparition yourself?’ No: nor did I ever see a murder. Yet I believe there is such a thing. Therefore I cannot as a reasonable man deny the fact; although I never saw it, and perhaps never may. The testimony of unexceptionable witnesses fully convinces me both of the one and the other.”

I am very far from giving credit to the common reports of apparitions. Many of them, no doubt, are the mere creatures of imagination. We may observe, however, that no man ever did, or ever can prove by sound argument, the impossibility of disembodied spirits appearing to men, or that they never have appeared to individuals. All then, which the most able and determined skeptic can do, is, to oppose his own dark and uncertain conjectures to the uniform testimony of all ages and of all nations. He has not therefore, so much cause for triumph as he would have the world to suppose. I cannot do better than conclude this subject with the words of Dr. Johnson, in his *Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia*. “If all your fear be of apparitions, (said the prince,) I will promise you safety: there is no danger from the dead; he that is once buried will be seen no more.”

“That the dead are seen no more (said Imlac) I will not undertake to maintain against the concurrent and unvaried testimony of all ages, and of all nations. There is no people, rude or learned, among whom apparitions of the dead are not related and believed. This opinion, which prevails as far as human nature is diffused, could become universal only by its truth: those that never heard of one another, would not have agreed in a tale which nothing but experience can make credible. That it is doubted by single cavillers, can very little weaken the general evidence: and some who deny it with their tongues, confess it by their fears.”

In September this year, Mr. Wesley wrote the following letter to Mr. James Morgan, on a point of doctrine. “I have been thinking much of you,” says Mr. Wesley, “and why should I not tell you all I think and all I fear concerning you?”

“I think all that you said at the conference, upon the subject at the late debates, was right. And it amounted to no more than this: ‘The general rule is, they who are in the favor of God, know they are so.’

But there may be some exceptions. Some may fear and love God, and yet not be clearly conscious of his favor: at least they may not dare to affirm, that their sins are forgiven.' If you put the case thus, I think no man in his senses will be under any temptation to contradict you. For none can doubt, but whoever loves God, is in the favor of God. But is not this a little mis-stating the case? I do not conceive the question turned here. But you said, or was imagined to say, 'All penitents are in God's favor;' or 'All who mourn after God, are in the favor of God.' And this was what many disliked: because they thought it was unscriptural, and unsafe, as well as contrary to what *we* have always taught. That this is contrary to what we always taught is certain, as all our hymns as well as other writings testify: so that (whether it be true or not) it is without all question, a new doctrine among the Methodists. We have always taught, that a penitent mourned or was pained on this very account, because he felt, he was 'not in the favor of God,' but had the wrath of God abiding on him. Hence we supposed the language of his heart to be, 'Lost and undone for aid I cry!' And we believed he really was 'lost and undone,' till God did

'Peace, joy, and righteousness impart
And speak himself into his heart.'

"And I still apprehend this to be scriptural doctrine; confirmed not by a few detached texts, but by the whole tenure of Scripture; and more particularly of the Epistle to the Romans. But if so, the contrary to it must be unsafe, for that general reason, because it is unscriptural. To which one may add the particular reason, that it naturally tends to lull mourners to sleep: to make them say, 'Peace, peace to their souls, when there is no peace.' It directly tends to damp and stifle their conviction, and to encourage them in sitting down contented, before Christ is revealed in them, and before his spirit witnesses with their spirit that they are children of God. But it may be asked, 'Will not this discourage mourners?' Yes, it will discourage them from stopping where they are, it will discourage them from resting before they have the witness in themselves, before Christ is revealed in them. But it will encourage them, to seek him in the gospel way: to ask till they receive pardon and peace. And we are to encourage them, not by telling them, they are in the favor of God, though they do not know it; (such a word as this we should never utter in a congregation, at the peril of our souls;) but by assuring them 'every one that seeketh, findeth; every one that asketh receiveth.'

"I am afraid you have not been sufficiently wary in this; but have given occasion to them that sought occasion. But this is not all. I doubt you did not see God's hand in Shimei's tongue. Unto you it was given to suffer a little, of what you extremely wanted, obloquy, and evil report. But you did not acknowledge either the gift or

the giver: you saw only T. O. not God. O Jemmy, you do not know yourself. You cannot bear to be continually steeped in poison: in the esteem and praise of men. Therefore, I tremble at your stay in Dublin. It is the most dangerous place for you under heaven. All I can say is, God can preserve you in the fiery furnace, and I hope will."

On Friday, August 4, 1769, Mr. Wesley read the following paper in the Conference, containing the outlines of a plan for the future union of the Methodist preachers.

"It has long been my desire, that all those ministers of the church who believe and preach salvation by faith, might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder, but help one another. After occasionally pressing this in private conversation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts on this head, and sent them to each in a letter. Only three vouchsafed to give me an answer. So I give this up. I can do no more. They are a rope of sand; and such they will continue.

"But it is otherwise with the travelling preachers in our connexion. You are at present one body: you act in concert with each other, and by united counsels. And now is the time to consider what can be done, in order to continue this union? Indeed, as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty: I am, under God, a centre of union to all our travelling, as well as local preachers.

"They all know me, and my communication. They all love me for my work's sake: and therefore, were it only out of regard to me, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this connexion be preserved, when God removes me from you?

"I take it for granted, it cannot be preserved by any means, between those who have not a single eye. Those who aim at any thing but the glory of God, and the salvation of souls; who desire, or seek any earthly thing, whether honor, profit, or ease; will not, cannot continue in the connexion; it will not answer their design.* Some of them, perhaps a fourth of the whole number, will procure preferment in the church; others will turn Independents, and get separate congregations. Lay your accounts with this, and be not surprised, if some you do not suspect, be of this number.

"But what method can be taken to preserve a firm union between those who choose to remain together?†

* Mr. Wesley, through the whole of this extract, speaks of the preachers continuing in connexion with each other, on the original plan of Methodism. But if *some* among the preachers, should begin to ordain one another, to alter the relative situation of the societies to the established church, and all denominations of Dissenters, and form themselves into an independent body; and if the other preachers connive at this, and do not separate from them, in order to continue the original plan; then it may answer the designs of the ambitious, to preserve the connexion among the preachers, though they seek earthly things, and their eye be not single as at the beginning.

† That is, upon the original plan of Methodism.

“Perhaps you might take some such steps as these.—On notice of my death, let all the preachers in England and Ireland, repair to London, within six weeks.—Let them seek God by solemn fasting and prayer.—Let them draw up articles of agreement, to be signed by those who choose to act in concert.—Let those be dismissed who do not choose it, in the most friendly manner possible.—Let them choose by votes, a committee of three, five, or seven, each of whom is to be moderator in his turn.—Let the committee do what I do now; propose preachers to be tried, admitted, or excluded: fix the place of each preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of the next Conference.

“Can any thing be done now, in order to lay a foundation for this future union? Would it not be well for any that are willing, to sign some articles of agreement, before God calls me hence? Suppose something like these:

“We, whose names are underwritten, being thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a close union between those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in this glorious work, in order to preserve this union between ourselves, are resolved, God being our helper, I. To devote ourselves entirely to God; denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing, to save our own souls, and them that hear us. II. To preach the old Methodist doctrines, and no other; contained in the minutes of the Conferences. III. To observe and enforce, the whole Methodist discipline, laid down in the said Minutes.”—These articles, I believe, were then signed by many of the preachers. But some years afterwards, the mystery of innovations began to work secretly in the minds of several of the preachers, who hoped to exalt themselves above all that had been known before among them. They knew Mr. Wesley did, and would let, or hinder, till he was taken out of the way: they had influence enough, however, to prevail upon him to relinquish the present plan, and leave the mode of union among the preachers after his death, to their own deliberations.

Two preachers had gone over to America some time before; though, I apprehend, not by Mr. Wesley’s authority. At the Conference, however, this year he sent two, Mr. Boardman, and Pillmoor, to preach and take charge of the societies in America, where Methodism began soon to flourish.

Mr. Wesley saw the work in which he was engaged, spread on every side. In 1770, he was able to reckon forty-nine circuits in England, Scotland, Ireland, and Wales: and one hundred and twenty-two itinerant preachers under his direction; besides about double the number of local preachers, who did not quit their usual occupations.

This year, the larger Minutes of Conference, were printed. The following abstract from them, will nearly complete our view of the economy of the Methodist societies.

Q. 1. “Have our Conferences been as useful as they might have been?”

A. "No; we have been continually straitened for time. Hence scarce any thing has been searched to the bottom. To remedy this, let every Conference last nine days, concluding on Wednesday in the second week.

Q. 2. "What may we reasonably believe to be God's design, in raising up the preachers called Methodists?"

A. "Not to form any new sect; but to reform the nation, particularly the church: and to spread scriptural holiness over the land.

Q. 3. "Is it advisable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any societies?"

A. "By no means; we have made the trial in various places: and that for a considerable time. But all the seed has fallen as by the highway-side. There is scarce any fruit remaining.

Q. 4. "Where should we endeavor to preach most?"

A. 1. "Where there is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers: 2. Where there is most fruit.

Q. 5. "Is field-preaching unlawful?"

A. "We conceive not. We do not know that it is contrary to any law either of God or man.

Q. 6. "Have we not used it too sparingly?"

A. "It seems we have: 1. Because our call is, to save that which is lost. Now we cannot expect them to seek us. Therefore we should go and seek them. 2. Because we are particularly called, by going into the highways and hedges (which none else will do) to compel them to come in. 3. Because that reason against it is not good, 'The house will hold all that come.' The house may hold all that come to the house; but not all that would come to the field.

"The greatest hinderance to this you are to expect from rich, or cowardly, or lazy Methodists. But regard them not, neither stewards, leaders, nor people. Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God's name into the most public places, and call all to repent and believe the gospel: every Sunday, in particular; especially where there are old societies, lest they settle upon their lees.

"The stewards will frequently oppose this, lest they lose their usual collection. But this is not a sufficient reason against it. Shall we barter souls for money?"

Q. 7. "Ought we not diligently to observe, in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?"

A. "We ought: and at that time to send more laborers than usual into that part of the harvest.

"But whence shall we have them? 1. So far as we can afford it, we will keep a reserve of preachers at Kingswood: 2. Let an exact list be kept of those who are proposed for trial, but not accepted.

Q. 8. "How often shall we permit strangers to be present at the meeting of the society?"

A. "At every other meeting of the society in every place, let no

stranger be admitted. At other times they may; but the same person not above twice or thrice. In order to this, see that all in every place show their tickets before they come in. If the stewards and leaders are not exact herein, employ others that have more resolution.

Q. 9. "Can any thing further be done, in order to make the meetings of the classes lively and profitable?"

A. 1. "Change improper leaders :

2. "Let the leaders frequently meet each other's classes.

3. "Let us observe, which leaders are the most useful, and let these meet the other classes as often as possible.

4. "See that all the leaders be not only men of sound judgment, but men truly devoted to God.

Q. 10. "How can we further assist those under our care?"

A. 1. "By meeting the married men and women together, the first Sunday after the visitation; the single men and women apart, on the two following, in all the large societies: this has been much neglected.

2. "By instructing them at their own houses. What unspeakable need is there of this? The world say, 'The Methodists are no better than other people.' This is not true. But it is nearer the truth, than we are willing to believe.

"N. B. For 1. Personal religion either toward God or man, is amazingly superficial among us.

"I can but just touch on a few generals. How little faith is there among us? How little communion with God? How little living in heaven, walking in eternity, deadness to every creature? How much love of the world? Desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money?

"How little brotherly-love? What continual judging one another? What gossiping, evil-speaking, tale-bearing? What want of moral honesty? To instance only in one or two particulars.

"Who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling? Particularly in selling horses? Write him knave that does not. And the Methodist knave is the worst of all knaves.

"2. Family religion is shamefully wanting, and almost in every branch.

"And the Methodists in general will be little the better, till we take quite another course with them. For what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels?

"We must, yea every travelling preacher, must instruct them from house to house. Till this is done, and that in good earnest, the Methodists will be little better than other people.

"Let every preacher, having a catalogue of those in each society, go to each house. Deal gently with them, that the report of it may move others to desire your coming. Give the children, 'the instructions for children,' and encourage them to get them by heart. Indeed you will find it no easy matter to teach the ignorant the principles of

religion. So true is the remark of Archbishop Usher. ‘Great scholars may think this work beneath them. But they should consider, the laying the foundation skilfully, as it is of the greatest importance, so it is the master-piece of the wisest builder. And let the wisest of us all try, whenever we please, we shall find, that to lay this ground work rightly, to make the ignorant understand the grounds of religion, will put us to the trial of all our skill.’

“Perhaps in doing this it may be well, after a few loving words spoken to all in the house, to take each person singly into another room, where you may deal closely with him, about his sin, and misery, and duty.—Set these home, or you lose all your labor: do this in earnest, and you will soon find what a work you take in hand, in undertaking to be a travelling preacher.

Q. 11. “How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the society?”

A. 1. “Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a leader, with whom they have met at least two months on trial. **2.** Give notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four times in a class. **3.** Give them the rules the first time they meet. See that this be never neglected.

Q. 12. “Should we insist on the band-rules? Particularly with regard to dress?”

A. “By all means. This is no time to give any encouragement to superfluity of apparel. Therefore give no band-tickets to any, till they have left off superfluous ornaments. In order to this, **1.** Let every assistant read the thoughts upon dress, at least once a year, in every large society. **2.** In visiting the classes, be very mild, but very strict. **3.** Allow no exempt case, not even of a married woman. Better one suffer than many. **4.** Give no tickets to any that wear calashes, high-heads, or enormous bonnets.

“To encourage meeting in band, **1.** In every large society, have a love-feast quarterly for the bands only. **2.** Never fail to meet them once a week. **3.** Exhort every believer to embrace the advantage. **4.** Give a band-ticket to none till they have met a quarter on trial.

“Observe! You give none a band ticket, *before* he meets, but *after* he has met.

Q. 13. “Do not Sabbath-breaking, dram-drinking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them, still prevail in several places? How may these evils be remedied?”

A. 1. “Let us preach expressly on each of these heads. **2.** Read in every society the sermon on evil-speaking. **3.** Let the leaders closely examine and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing. **4.** Let the preacher warn every society, that none who is guilty herein can remain with us. **5.** Extirpate smuggling, buying, or selling uncustomed goods, out of every society. Let none remain

with us, who will not totally abstain from every kind and degree of it. Speak tenderly, but earnestly and frequently of it, in every society near the coasts. And read to them, and diligently disperse among them, 'The Word to a Smuggler.' 6. Extirpate bribery, receiving any thing, directly or indirectly, for voting in any election. Show no respect of persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing. Largely show, both in public and private, the wickedness of thus selling our country. And every where read 'The Word to a Freeholder,' and disperse it with both hands.

Q. 14. "What shall we do to prevent scandal, when any of our members become bankrupt?"

A. "Let the assistant talk with him at large. And if he has not kept fair accounts, or has been concerned in that base practice, of raising money by coining notes (commonly called the bill-trade) let him be expelled immediately.

Q. 15. "What is the office of a Christian minister?"

A. "To watch over souls, as he that must give account.

Q. 16. "In what view may we and our helpers be considered?"

A. "Perhaps as extraordinary messengers (i. e. out of the ordinary way) designed, 1. To provoke the regular ministers to jealousy. To supply their lack of service, toward those who are perishing for want of knowledge. But how hard is it to abide here? Who does not wish to be a little higher? Suppose, to be *ordained!*

Q. 17. "What is the office of an *helper*?"

A. "In the absence of a minister, to feed and guide the flock: in particular,

1. "To preach morning and evening. (But he is never to begin later in the evening than seven o'clock, unless in particular cases.)

2. "To meet the society and the bands weekly.

3. "To meet the leaders weekly.

"Let every preacher be particularly exact in this, and in the morning-preaching. If he has twenty hearers let him preach. If not, let him sing and pray.

"N. B. We are fully determined, never to drop the morning-preaching: and to continue preaching at five, wherever it is practicable, particularly, in London and Bristol.

Q. 18. "What are the rules of an *helper*?"

A. 1. "Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time: neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.

2. "Be serious. Let your motto be, holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking.

3. "Converse sparingly and cautiously with women: particularly with young women.

4. "Take no step toward marriage, without first consulting with your brethren.

5. "Believe evil of no one: unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing. You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

6. "Speak evil of no one: else your word especially, would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned.

7. "Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly as soon as may be: else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom.

8. "Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a dancing-master. A preacher of the gospel is the servant of all.

9. "Be ashamed of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water: not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbor's.

10. "Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time. And in general do not *mend* our rules, but *keep* them: not for wrath, but for conscience-sake.

11. "You have nothing to do, but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.

"Observe. It is not your business, to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that society: but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! A Methodist preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline! Therefore you will need all the sense you have: and to have all your wits about you!

12. "Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the gospel. As such it is your part to employ your time, in the manner which we direct: partly in preaching and visiting from house to house: partly in reading, meditation, and prayer. Above all, if you labor with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that part of the work which we advise, at those times and places which we judge most for his glory.

Q. 19. "What power is this, which you exercise over both the preachers and societies?"

A. 1. "In November, 1738, two or three persons who desired to flee from the wrath to come, and then a few more came to me in London, and desired me to advise, and pray with them. I said, 'If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can.' More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The case was afterwards the same at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and many other parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It may be observed, the desire was on their

part, not mine. My desire was, to live and die in retirement. But I did not see, that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God.

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

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

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

3. “After a time a young man named Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards, and then a third, Thomas Westall. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labor when and where I should direct. Observe. These likewise desired me, not I them. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my power, to appoint each of these, when, and where, and how to labor: that is, while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased: as I had also to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same, when the number of preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint when, and where, and how each should help me; and to tell any (if I saw cause) ‘I do not desire your help any longer.’ On these terms, and no other, we joined at first: on these we continue joined. But they do me no favor in being directed by me. It is true, my reward is with the Lord. But at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care; and often a burden, I scarce know how to bear.

4. “In 1744, I wrote to several clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the gospel; desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice, concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increased, so

that it was not convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and they only met me at London, or elsewhere: till at length I gave a general permission, which I afterwards saw cause to retract.

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

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

6. “But ‘several gentlemen are offended at your having *so much power*.’ I did not seek any part of it. But when it was come unawares, not daring to bury that talent, I used it to the best of my judgment. Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now, bear it as my burden; the burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not lay it down.

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

Q. 20. “What reasons can be assigned why so many of our preachers contract nervous disorders?”

A. “The chief reason, on Dr. Cadogan’s principles, is either indolence or intemperance, 1. Indolence. Several of them use too little *exercise*, far less than when they wrought at their trade. And this will naturally pave the way for many, especially nervous disorders. 2. Intemperance, (though not in the vulgar sense.) They take more *food* than they did when they labored more. And let any man of reflection judge, how long this will consist with health. Or they use more *sleep* than when they labored more. And this alone will destroy the firmness of the nerves. If then our preachers would avoid nervous disorders, let them, 1. Take as little meat, drink, and sleep, as nature will bear: and 2. Use full as much exercise daily as they did before they were preachers.

Q. 21. “What general method of employing our time would you advise us to?”

A. “We advise you, 1. As often as possible to rise at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read, partly the Scripture with the notes, partly the closely-practical parts of what we have published. 3. From six

in the morning till twelve (allowing an hour for breakfast) to read in order, with much prayer, first, the Christian library, and the other books which we have published in prose and verse, and then those which we recommended in our rules of Kingswood-School.

Q. 22. "Should our helpers follow trades?"

A. "The question is not, Whether they may occasionally work with their hands, as St. Paul did: but whether it be proper for them to keep shop or follow merchandize? After long consideration, it was agreed by all our brethren, that no preacher who will not relinquish his trade of buying and selling (though it were only pills, drops, or balsams) shall be considered as a travelling preacher any longer.

Q. 23. "Why is it that the people under our care are no better?"

A. "Other reasons may concur: but the chief is, because we are not more knowing and more holy.

Q. 24. "But why are we not more knowing?"

A. "Because we are idle. We forget our very first rule, 'Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time; neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary.'

"I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear. Which of you spends as many hours a day in God's work, as you did formerly in man's work? We talk, talk,—or read history, or what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God.

"But how? 1. Read the most useful books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the morning in this employ, or at least five hours in four and twenty.

"'But I read only the Bible.' Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and by parity of reason, to hear only the Bible; but if so, you need preach no more. Just so said George Bell. And what is the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible, nor anything else.

"This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. 'Bring the books,' says he, 'but especially the parchments,' those wrote on parchment.

"'But I have no taste for reading.' Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.

"'But I have no books.' I will give each of you as fast as you will read them, books to the value of five pounds. And I desire the assistants would take care, that all the large societies provide our works, or at least the notes, for the use of the preachers.

2. "In the afternoon, follow Mr. Baxter's plan. Then you will have no time to spare: you will have work enough for all your time. Then likewise no preacher will stay with us who is as salt that has

lost its savor. For to such, this employment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the knowledge you have, or can procure.

“The sum is, go into *every house* in course, and teach *every one* therein, young and old, if they belong to us, to be Christians, inwardly and outwardly.

“Make every particular plain to their understanding; fix it in their memory; write it in their heart. In order to this, there must be ‘line upon line, precept upon precept.’ What patience, what love, what knowledge is requisite for this!

Q. 25. “In what particular method should we instruct them?”

A. “You may as you have time, read, explain, enforce, 1. The rules of the society: 2. Instructions for children: 3. The fourth volume of sermons, and 4. Philip Henry’s method of family prayer. We must needs do this, were it only to avoid idleness. Do we not loiter away many hours in every week? Each try himself: no idleness can consist with growth in grace. Nay without exactness in *redeeming time*, you cannot retain the grace you received in justification.

“But what shall we do for the *rising generation*? Unless we take care of this, the present revival will be *res unius atatis*: it will last only the age of a man. Who will labor herein? Let him that is zealous for God and the souls of men begin *now*.

1. “Where there are ten children in a society, meet them at least an hour every week: 2. Talk with them every time you see any at home: 3. Pray in earnest for them: 4. Diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses: 5. Preach expressly on education, particularly at midsummer, when you speak of Kingswood. ‘But I have no gift for this.’ Gift or no gift you are to do it; else you are not called to be a Methodist preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use the means for it. Particularly, study the instructions and lessons for children.

Q. 26. “Why are not *we* more holy? Why do not we live in eternity? Walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all *devoted to God*? Breathing the whole spirit of *missionaries*?”

A. “Chiefly because we are enthusiasts; looking for the end, without using the means.

“To touch only upon two or three instances.

“Who of you rises at four in summer? Or even at five, when he does not preach?”

“Do you recommend to all our societies, the five o’clock hour for private prayer? Do you observe it? Or any other *fixt time*? Do not you find by experience, that *any time is no time*?”

“Do you know the obligation and the benefit of fasting? How often do you practise it?”

Q. 27. "What is the best general method of preaching?"

A. "1. To invite: 2. To convince: 3. To offer Christ: 4. To build up; and to do this in some measure in every sermon.

Q. 28. "Have not some of us been led off from practical preaching by (what was called) *preaching Christ*?"

A. "Indeed we have. The most effectual way of preaching Christ, is to preach him in all his offices, and to declare his *law* as well as his *gospel*, both to believers and unbelievers. Let us strongly and closely insist upon inward and outward holiness, in all its branches.

Q. 29. "How shall we guard against formality in public worship? Particularly in singing?"

A. "1. By preaching frequently on the head: 2. By taking care to speak only what we feel: 3. By choosing such hymns as are proper for the congregation: 4. By not singing too much at once: seldom more than five or six verses: 5. By suiting the tune to the words: 6. By often stopping short and asking the people, 'Now! Do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt?'

"After preaching, take a little lemonade, mild ale, or candied orange-peel. All spirituous liquors, at that time especially, are deadly poison.

Q. 30. "Who is the assistant?"

A. "That preacher in each circuit, who is appointed from time to time, to take charge of the societies and the other preachers therein.

Q. 31. "How should an assistant be qualified for his charge?"

A. "By walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart: by understanding and loving discipline, ours in particular; and by loving the Church of England, and resolving not to separate from it. Let this be well observed. I fear, when the Methodists leave the church, God will leave them. But if they are thrust out of it, they will be guiltless.

Q. 32. "What is the business of an assistant?"

A. "1. To see that the other preachers in his circuit behave well, and want nothing: 2. To visit the classes quarterly, regulate the bands, and deliver tickets: 3. To take in, or put out of the society or the bands: 4. To keep watch-nights and love-feasts: 5. To hold quarterly meetings, and therein diligently to inquire both into the temporal and spiritual state of each society: 6. To take care that every society be duly supplied with books: particularly with *Kempis*, and *Instructions for Children*, which ought to be in every house: O why is not this regarded? 7. To send from every quarterly meeting a circumstantial account (to London) of every remarkable conversion, and remarkable death: 8. To take exact lists of his societies every quarter, and send them up to London: 9. To meet the married men and women, and the single men and women in the large societies once a quarter: 10. To overlook the accounts of all the stewards.

Q. 33. "Has the office of an assistant been well executed?"

A. "No, not by half the assistants. 1. Who has sent me word, whether the other preachers behave well or ill? 2. Who has visited all the classes, and regulated the bands quarterly? 3. Love-feasts for the bands have been neglected; neither have persons been duly taken in, and put out of the bands: 4. The societies are not half supplied with books; not even with those above mentioned. O exert yourselves in this! Be not weary! Leave no stone unturned! 5. How few accounts have I had, either of remarkable deaths, or remarkable conversions! 6. How few exact lists of the societies! 7. How few have met the married and single persons once a quarter!"

Q. 34. "Are there any other advices, which you would give the assistants?"

A. "Several. 1. Take a regular catalogue of your societies, as they live, in *house-row*: 2. Leave your successor a particular account of the state of the circuit: 3. See that every band leader has the rules of the bands: 4. Vigorously, but calmly enforce the rules concerning needless ornaments, drams, snuff, and tobacco. Give no band-ticket to any man or woman, who does not promise to leave them off: 5. As soon as there are four men or women believers in any place, put them into a band: 6. Suffer no love-feast to last above an hour and a half; and instantly stop all breaking the cake with another: 7. Warn all from time to time, that none are to remove from one society to another, without a certificate from the assistant in these words (else he will not be received in other societies) 'A. B. the bearer, is a member of our society in C. I believe he has sufficient cause for removing.' I beg every assistant to remember this. 8. Every where recommend decency and cleanliness. Cleanliness is next to godliness. 9. Exhort all that were brought up in the church, to continue therein. Set the example yourself: and immediately change every plan that would hinder their being at church, at least two Sundays in four. Carefully avoid whatever has a tendency to separate men from the church: and let all the servants in our preaching-houses go to church once on Sunday at least.

"Is there not a cause? Are we not unawares by little and little sliding into a separation from the church? O use every means to prevent this! 1. Exhort all our people to keep close to the church and sacrament: 2. Warn them against niceness in hearing, a prevailing evil! 3. Warn them also against despising the prayers of the church: 4. Against calling our society the church: 5. Against calling our preachers, ministers, our houses meeting-houses; call them plain preaching-houses or chapels: 6. Do not license them as Dissenters; the proper paper to be sent in at the assize's sessions, or bishop's court, is this: 'A. B. has set apart his house in C. for public worship, of which he desires a certificate.'—N. B. The justices do not license the house, but the act of parliament. 7. Do not license yourself till

you are constrained; and then not as a Dissenter, but a Methodist. It is time enough when you are prosecuted, to take the oaths. And by so doing you are licensed.

Q. 35. "But are we not Dissenters?"

A. "No. Although we call sinners to repentance in all places of God's dominion; and although we frequently use extempore prayer, and unite together in a religious society: yet we are not Dissenters in the only sense which our law acknowledges, namely those who renounce the service of the church. We do not: we dare not separate from it. We are not Seceders, nor do we bear any resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite principles. The Seceders laid the very foundation of their work in judging and condemning others. We laid the foundation of our work, in judging and condemning ourselves. They begin every where, with showing their hearers how fallen the church and ministers are. We begin every where, with showing our hearers, how fallen they are themselves. What they do in America, or what their minutes say on this subject, is nothing to us. We will keep in the good old way.

"And never let us make light of going to church, either by word or deed. Remember Mr. Hook, a very eminent, and a zealous Papist. When I asked him, 'Sir, what do you do for public worship here, where you have no Romish service?' He answered, 'Sir, I am so fully convinced, it is the duty of every man to worship God in public, that I go to church every Sunday. If I cannot have such worship as I would, I will have such worship as I can.'

"But some may say, 'Our own service is public worship.' Yes; but not such as supersedes the church service: it presupposes public prayer, like the sermons at the university. If it were designed to be instead of the church-service, it would be essentially defective. For, it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving.

"If the people put ours in the room of the church-service, we hurt them that stay with us, and ruin them that leave us. For then they will go no where, but lounge the Sabbath away, without any public worship at all.

Q. 36. "Nay, but is it not our duty, to separate from the church, considering the wickedness both of the clergy and the people?"

A. "We conceive not, 1. Because both the priests and the people were full as wicked in the Jewish church. And yet it was not the duty of the holy Israelites to separate from them: 2. Neither did our Lord command his disciples to separate from them: he rather commanded the contrary. 3. Hence it is clear, *that* could not be the meaning of St. Paul's words, 'Come out from among them, and be ye separate.'

Q. 37. "But what reasons are there, why we should not separate from the church?"

A. "Among others, those which were printed above twenty years ago, entitled 'Reasons against a separation from the Church of England!'

"We allow two exceptions. 1. If the parish minister be a notoriously wicked man: 2. If he preach Socinianism, Arianism, or any other essentially false doctrine.

Q. 38. "Do we sufficiently watch over our helpers?"

A. "We might consider those that are with us as our pupils: into whose behavior and studies we should inquire every day.

"Should we not frequently ask each, 'Do you walk closely with God? Have you *now* fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement? Do you spend the day in the manner which we advise? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely? Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them, on all other persons?' &c. &c.

Q. 39. "What can be done, in order to a closer union of our helpers with each other?"

A. "1. Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at present, and the absolute necessity of it: 2. Let them pray for a desire of union. 3. Let them speak freely to each other: 4. When they meet, let them never part without prayer: 5. Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts: 6. Let them never speak slightly of each other in any kind: 7. Let them defend one another's characters in every thing, so far as consists with truth; and 8. Let them labor in honor each to prefer the other before himself.

Q. 40. "How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?"

A. "Inquire, 1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? 2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God by their preaching?"

"As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof, that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

Q. 41. "What method may we use in receiving a new helper?"

A. "A proper time, for doing this, is at a conference after solemn fasting and prayer.

"Every person proposed is then to be present; and each of them may be asked,

“Have you faith in Christ? Are you going on to perfection? Do you expect to be perfected in love in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to his work? Do you know the Methodist plan? Have you read the Plain Account? The Appeals? Do you know the rules of the society? Of the bands? Do you keep them? Do you take no snuff? tobacco? drams? Do you constantly attend the church and sacrament? Have you read the Minutes of the Conference? Are you willing to conform to them? Have you considered the rules of an helper? Especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience-sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you preach every morning and evening: endeavoring not to speak too long, or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting, both by precept and example?

“Are you in debt? Are you engaged to marry?

“(N. B. A preacher who marries while on trial, is thereby set aside.)

“We may then receive him as a probationer by giving him the minutes of the Conference inscribed thus:

“To *A. B.*

“You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a fellow-laborer.

“Let him then read, and carefully weigh what is contained therein, that if he has any doubt, it may be removed.

“Observe! Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting a preacher. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong. Otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every assistant explain this to them that are on trial.

“When he has been on trial four years, if recommended by the assistant, he may be received into full connexion, by giving him the minutes inscribed thus: ‘As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavor to walk by these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-laborer.’ Mean time let none exhort in any of our societies, without a note of permission from the assistant: let every exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly: and let every assistant insist upon it.

Q. 42. “What is the method wherein we usually proceed in our Conferences?

A. “We inquire,

“1. What preachers are admitted?

“Who remain on trial?

“Who are admitted on trial?

“Who desist from travelling?

"2. Are there any objections to any of the preachers? Who are named one by one.

"3. How are the preachers stationed this year?

"4. What numbers are in the society?

"5. What is the Kingswood collection?

"6. What boys are received this year?

"7. What girls are assisted?

"8. What is contributed for the contingent expenses?

"9. How was this expended?

"10. What is contributed toward the fund, for superannuated and supernumerary preachers?

"11. What demands are there upon it?

"12. How many preachers' wives are to be provided for? By what societies?

"13. Where, and when, may our next Conference begin?

Q. 43. "How can we provide for superannuated and supernumerary preachers?

A. "Those who can preach four or five times a week, are supernumerary preachers. As for those who cannot,

"1. Let every travelling preacher contribute half a guinea yearly at the Conference.

"2. Let every one when first admitted as a travelling preacher pay a guinea.

"3. Let this be lodged in the hands of the stewards.

"4. Out of this let provision be made first for the worn-out preachers, and then for the widows and children of those that are dead.

"5. Let an exact account of all receipts and disbursements be produced at the Conference.

"6. Let every assistant bring to the Conference, the contribution of every preacher in his circuit.

Q. 44. "Are not many of the preachers' wives still straitened for the necessaries of life?

A. "Some certainly have been. To prevent this for the time to come,

"1. Let every circuit either provide each with a lodging, coals, and candles, or allow her fifteen pounds a year.

"2. Let the assistant take this money at the quarterly meeting, before any thing else be paid out of it. Fail not to do this.

Q. 45. "What can be done, in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed?

A. "1. Let every preacher read carefully over the life of David Brainard. Let us be followers of him, as he was of Christ, in absolute self-devotion, in total deadness to the world, and in fervent love to God and man. Let us but secure this point, and the world and the devil must fall under our feet.

“2. Let both assistants and preachers be conscientiously exact in the whole Methodist discipline.

“3. See that no circuit be at any time without preachers. Therefore let no preacher, who does not attend the Conference, leave the circuit, at that time, on any pretence whatever. This is the most improper time in the whole year. Let every assistant see to this, and require each of these to remain in the circuit, till the new preachers come.

“Let not all the preachers in any circuit come to the Conference.

“Let those who do come, set out as late and return as soon as possible.

“4. Wherever you can, appoint prayer-meetings, and particularly on Friday.

“5. Let a fast be observed in all our societies, the last Friday in August, November, February, and May.

“6. Be more active in dispersing the books, particularly the sermon on, *The good Steward*, on *Indwelling Sin*, the *Repentance of Believers*, and the *Scripture-Way of Salvation*. Every assistant may give away small tracts. And he may beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

“7. Strongly and explicitly exhort all believers, to go on to perfection. That we may all speak the same thing, I ask once for all, Shall we defend this perfection, or give it up? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby (as we did from the beginning) salvation from all sin, by the love of God and man filling our heart. The Papists say, ‘This cannot be attained, till we have been refined by the fire of Purgatory.’ The Calvinists say, ‘Nay, it will be attained as soon as the soul and body part.’ The Old Methodists say, ‘It may be attained before we die: a moment after is too late.’ Is it so, or not? You are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin before death. The substance then is settled. But, as to the circumstance, is the change gradual or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are justified, there may be a gradual sanctification, a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if sin cease before death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an instantaneous change. There must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not. ‘But should we in preaching insist both on one, and the other?’ Certainly we must insist on the gradual change; and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous also? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? And the rather, because constant experience shows, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul: the more watchful they are against all sin; the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punc-

tual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. (Whereas just the contrary effects are observed, whenever this expectation ceases.) They are saved by hope, by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope and that salvation stands still, or rather decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual change in believers, should strongly insist on the instantaneous.

Q. 46. "What can be done, to increase the work of God in Scotland?"

A. "1. Preach abroad as much as possible. 2. Try every town and village. 3. Visit every member in the society at home.

Q. 47. "Are our preaching-houses safe?"

A. "Not at all: for some of them are not settled on trustees. Several of the trustees for others are dead.

Q. 48. "What then is to be done?"

A. "1. Let those who have debts on any of the houses give a bond, to settle them as soon as they are indemnified.

"2. Let the surviving trustees choose others without delay, by indorsing their deed thus:

'We the remaining trustees of the Methodist preaching-house in _____, do according to the power vested in us by this deed, choose _____ to be trustees of the said house, in the place of _____

'Witness our hands _____.'

"N. B. The deed must have three new stamps, and must be enrolled in Chancery within six months.

Q. 49. "May any new preaching-houses be built?"

A. "Not unless, 1. They are proposed at the Conference: no nor 2. Unless two-thirds of the expense be subscribed. And if any collection be made for them, it must be made between the Conference and the beginning of February.

Q. 50. "How may we raise a general fund for carrying on the whole work of God?"

A. "By a yearly subscription to be proposed by every assistant when he visits the classes at Christmas, and received at the visitation following.

Q. 51. "We said in 1744, 'We have leaned too much toward Calvinism.' Wherein?"

A. "1. With regard to man's faithfulness. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression, therefore we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert upon His authority, that if a man is not faithful in the unrighteous mammon, God will *not* give him the true riches.

"2. With regard to working for life, which our Lord expressly commands us to do. Labor (*εργαζεσθε*) literally, work for the meat, that endureth to everlasting life. And in fact, every believer, till he comes to glory, works for, as well as from life.

“3. We have received it as a maxim, 'That 'a man is to do nothing, in order to justification.' Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favor with God should cease from evil and learn to do well. So God himself teaches by the prophet Isaiah. Whoever repents should do works meet for repentance. And if this is not in order to find favor, what does he do them for?

“Once more review the whole affair :

“1. Who of us is now accepted of God ?

“He that now believes in Christ, with a loving obedient heart.

“2. But who among those that never heard of Christ ?

“He that according to the light he has, feareth God and worketh righteousness.

“3. Is this the same with, he that is sincere ?

“Nearly, if not quite.

“4. Is not this salvation by works ?

“Not by the *merit* of works, but by works as a *condition*.

“5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years ?

“I am afraid, *about words* : (namely, in some of the foregoing instances.)

“6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid : we are rewarded *according to our works*, yea *because of our works*. How does this differ from, *for the sake of our works* ? And how differs this from *secundum merita operum* ? Which is no more than, *as our works deserve* ? Can you split this hair ? I doubt, I cannot.

“7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those, who by their own confession neither feared God, nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule ?

“It is a doubt, whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness ? His own thinking so is no proof. For we know, how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.

“8. Does not talking, without the proper caution, of a *justified* or *sanctified state*, tend to mislead men ? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in *one moment* ? Whereas we are every moment *pleasing* or *displeasing* to God, *according to our works* ? According to the whole of our present inward tempers, and outward behavior.”