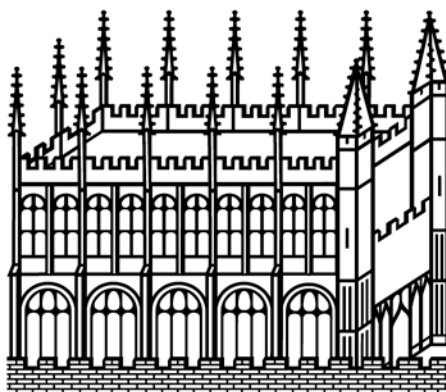




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THE WESLEYAN CONFERENCE

AND

THE REV. JAMES CAUGHEY.

OF all existing ecclesiastical authorities in the British dominions, there is not one whose deliberations excite a larger amount of interest, and whose acts exert a more extensive and powerful influence than do those of the annual Conference of the Wesleyan Methodist Ministers of Great Britain. Exercising as it does in spiritual affairs, the direct government of more than three hundred thousand members of its societies at home, and upwards of one hundred thousand abroad; a government which in some degree affects perhaps not fewer than a million and a half of regular hearers, scattered over England and Wales, part of Scotland, the West Indies, the continent of British North America, portions of continental Europe, Africa, India, Polynesia, &c., and having also the fostering control of the Irish Conference, with its twenty-seven thousand, five hundred and forty-six members;—the degree and extent to which its proceedings affect the happiness of men and the destinies of the species, are beyond computation.

Having to transact business of a varied, sometimes complicated, often accumulated character, which must be dispatched within a limited period;—business in which clashing interests and feelings are involved; intense anxiety frequently awaits its decisions, and proportionably pleasurable or painful are the emotions with which those decisions are received.

That the Conference of 1846 would take up the case of the Rev. James Caughey, of the Methodist Episcopal Church of America, was universally expected. Preliminary measures had been taken by the May District Meeting of the Manchester and Bolton District, disparaging reports respecting Mr. Caughey were industriously circulated, and severe criticism was freely indulged. Many superintendents and others firmly opposed and resisted any attempts to obtain his introduction into their respective circuits. *How* his case would be dealt with and disposed of, became a question of moment, awakening deep solicitude. For the *actual issue*, few, at least, among his friends and admirers, were at all prepared. Hence, strong expressions of feeling, extensive disquiet, and some degree of

controversy have followed. Many minds have been painfully agitated, many hearts pierced, many spirits grieved.—Some were smitten with consternation, many were struck dumb, the spiritual ideas of some were utterly confounded. What did the Conference mean? How could the Resolution in reference to Mr. Caughey be reconciled with spiritual duty and concern for the work of God? To these questions there seemed to be no satisfactory answer.

A pause ensued: and then a thousand voices asked, "What can be done?" A thousand more responded, "Something must be done?" Perhaps the most honest answer in such a case is—You can do nothing but submit: and the sooner and more thoroughly you submit, the better. But ought there to be submission without any expression of opinion?—It was felt by some of as good and worthy men as any in the Connexion, in common with thousands more, that there ought not: inasmuch as that would be a betrayal of the interests of immortal souls, of the cause of the Lord Jesus himself, and of the ministerial character and work of one of his most eminent servants.

An extraordinary difference of judgment exists between a majority of the ministers of the Connexion, and almost the whole mass of those members of their societies and congregations, and others who have sat under Mr. Caughey's ministry. The same difference exists between the majority of ministers and that minority that has been connected with his operations and witnessed their effects. A minority, comprising not every one, it is true, that has had an opportunity to see and test the man and his work, but many who are known to be men of holy fervour, enlightened zeal, and unimpeachable integrity and honour. If this difference related to a point of simple policy, it would be of far less consequence than it is: but, appearing as it does, to touch the spiritual and vital character of Methodism, to contemplate it with other than deeply solemn and chastened feelings were a sin.

Unanimity of judgment upon many questions is neither possible nor desirable. A near approximation to it upon some, is greatly to be wished. But where perfect unanimity cannot be had, mutual forbearance is obligatory upon all. With these sentiments would the writer approach the discussion of the case before him. It is not his wish to either wound or exasperate the wounds of any man, or of any body of men. He would rather heal than wound, mollify than exasperate. Is there any hope that he can either heal or mollify? Will any thing he can say render any service to the cause of peace and love? Though he dare not be over sanguine, he will not despair. The same authority that declares, "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God; lays down the axiom, "A soft answer turneth away wrath;" and pronounces, "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God." This is the

writer's ground of hope. He may fail partially, but perhaps not totally. Or, should he fail altogether of his object, yet, the intention and the attempt shall bring some fruit of good to his own soul, and shall flow back with increase to his own spirit.

Great diversity of opinion having been entertained respecting Mr. Caughey and his proceedings, it is manifest that no course that could have been pursued by the Conference upon his case, could by possibility have given satisfaction to all parties. Some must of necessity have been disappointed, and would therefore have been offended. In touching the case at all, therefore, the Conference had no escape from offending, and perhaps wounding some or other.

In speaking of the Conference, it is proper to maintain due respect without servility; and to use "Plainness of speech" without rudeness or insult. It is an assemblage of christian ministers; a body of men given up entirely to spiritual work. We know the men, and their conversation. We have habitual intercourse with them. We are bound to respect them for their office' sake. But we are bound also to believe that they are neither immaculate nor infallible. That they are superior to the influence of prejudice, passion, pride, ignorance, and other human defects, we are not bound to believe. They make no pretensions to divine perfections. They are not even angels, but *men*. They are subject to the common and unavoidable infirmities of a fallen nature; it must therefore be acknowledged that they are liable to err. And in such an acknowledgment, no more is implied than is equally true of any other order or body of men, whether ministers or laymen, in christendom; aye, or any where else in the wide world.

But whatever be their infirmities, many of them are as venerable for character as they are for years, and of these and many others there is no reason to question that what they do in the affairs of the Lord's house, they do from motives as high, as holy, as simple as those which actuate either Mr. Caughey or any other man. They may be misinformed upon a subject, respecting which they are required to pronounce judgment; they may reason from partial premises, and thence deduce erroneous conclusions; they may form an opinion from incomplete evidence; they may take ground which they shall subsequently find to be untenable. What body of men is exempt from such infirmities? And what reasonable man can refuse to make due allowances for infirmities that are unavoidable? And what man of God will deny that such infirmities may consist with the highest conscientiousness, the most perfect sincerity, and the purest intentions to do what is right? Let these admissions be made: let them be made heartily and without reserve: and let them be made on all hands: then we may approach the consideration of Mr. Caughey's case, and the act of Conference thereon, without much risk of either doing or receiving harm, and with at least a presumptive hope of doing good.

To the Conference unquestionably belongs the power over its own pulpits. No man can claim the liberty of occupying a Wesleyan pulpit if the Conference lay him under interdict. That to such a power tremendous responsibility attaches, must be granted: and that the power should be exercised with the greatest possible prudence, and under the deepest conviction of fidelity, I am not disposed to deny. Neither will I shrink from acknowledging the possibility of the power being abused: but so it might be in whatever hands it should be lodged. The power, however, is there; and vain were the attempt either to gainsay or to resist it.

And while the Conference holds the power over the pulpits of the Connexion, it possesses also the inherent right to determine whom it will admit to its fellowship; whom it will incorporate with itself; and whom it will dis sever and cast out from itself; a right which it does not claim to exercise arbitrarily or capriciously, but according to recognized rule, and in accordance with ascertained, avowed, and acknowledged principles.

To the Conference, also, as the collective head of the Wesleyan church, belongs the government of the body, a function which it has not usurped, nor yet assumed; but which devolved upon it by the circumstances in which the Connexion originated and progressed, and by the constitution of the Connexion itself. Hence it follows that the Conference is the guardian and administrator of the discipline of the body, and is responsible in the eyes of both God and man for whatever laxity of discipline may exist, and for any irregularities whatever, that may prevail any where, whether among people or ministers.

The Conference then has not stepped beyond its province in its interference with the proceedings of Mr. Caughey. It has not meddled with a matter that belonged not to it. Neither has it interfered hastily. It has looked on and forbore to move until interference could no longer be postponed, but became equally an inevitable procedure, and an imperative duty. Conflicting reports were in circulation; animosity had been kindled; party feeling had become rife; insinuations and suspicions as to some doubtful and ulterior but undefinable object of Mr. Caughey were freely uttered; his proceedings were caricatured and ridiculed; aspersions were cast upon his character; ominous inuendoes, intangible indeed but full of mysterious import, crept from the lips of some in reference to the *trickery* by which the astounding effects of a novel species of spiritual tactics were produced. The public press bandied about distorted pencillings of the strange, unearthly scenes exhibited in Wesleyan chapels, by an extraordinary nondescript being let loose from the continent of America: and both ministers and people, Wesleyans and other denominations too, contending about him, some said one thing, some another, part of them affirming, "He is

a good man," and brings many souls to Christ ; part of them denying, " Nay, but he deceiveth the people ;" and part of them looking agast, not knowing what to say, nor what to think. Such was the state of things when the Conference proceeded to action upon the case.

And now let us glance at the broad *facts* of the case. Mr. Caughey had come to England without invitation, and without delegation ; without an official mission, and without a known and defined object. He came upon his own responsibility, and remained for five successive years without any formal and specific recognition on the part of any church of Christ in these realms. No offer of his service was made either by himself or by any one on his behalf, either to the Wesleyan Conference, or to the authorities of any other church. He entered upon the territories of other men, and wrought in their vineyard, without formally identifying himself or seeking to be identified with them. He passed through the British Isles, visiting a large number of places, abiding for a considerable time at each, and creating an extraordinary sensation wherever he came. He gained upon the affections of the people, so as to win their hearts by thousands, and obtained the esteem and love of not a few of their ministers. His influence was becoming gigantic. The churches of Methodism were clamouring by the score for his services. His fame filled almost the whole Connexion. His name and deeds had become almost the universal topic. That envy on the part of some, jealousy on the part of others, and some degree of uneasiness on the part of most of the ministers of the body should result from these facts, was inevitable. The whole of his proceedings in Great Britain and Ireland were anomalous ; his whole course was erratic. He had struck out a new line of things. He had come like a comet from another system, moving in an eccentric orbit of his own, and was seen a perfectly new phenomenon in Methodism. That the Conference should have so long tolerated the irregularity was a wonder ; that it should tolerate it any longer was not likely. There was difficulty in dealing with so anomalous a case, under circumstances so extraordinary : there was danger in leaving it untouched : the *best mode* of treating it was the problem. What was the *best* and *wisest* course to take ?

That a grave and powerful body of Christian Ministers should quit its own position, and solicit an individual minister to become incorporated with itself, would be contrary to all propriety and the true order of things. Such a step could not be taken. That Mr. Caughey should apply for such recognition as would subject him to a controul discordant with his convictions of a special vocation, was equally impossible. That the Conference should remain passive spectators of any symptoms of disruption was out of the question. The ghost of former agitations and divisions rose up in view, and

the sins of former delinquents sprang out of their graves, and alarmed the timid. Every principle of self-security and of ordinary ecclesiastical polity seemed to shut up the Conference to one course only,—that of terminating the irregular and hazardous career of an independent and erratic individual within the jeopardized enclosure of British Wesleyanism.

Whether there really was not any other course that might have been taken with safety, and whether there are not considerations that would fully justify a different course, I pause not here to inquire. Candour and honesty require that *both sides* of a question be considered, and that all the impartiality we can command be summoned to our inquiries. What we cannot altogether and at once approve, should not be hastily and totally condemned. And if the difficulty, the irregularity, the novelty, and the hazard of Mr. Caughey's case be fairly weighed, those who have been wounded in his person will see reason sufficient for being sparing in censure, and liberal in the grace that "thinketh no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth: beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things."

In so far justifying the Conference, however, do we not condemn Mr. Caughey? Certainly not. Such a consequence does not necessarily follow. Though the Conference be in the right, it does not prove Mr. Caughey to be in the wrong. If there are grounds and reasons that justify the one, there are also grounds and reasons that fully justify the other. The Conference has acted in its connexional capacity, and upon connexional principles,—Mr. Caughey in his individual capacity, and upon principles now to be considered and applied to his proceedings.

To break away as he did from his own regular work in America, and commence and prosecute an irregular crusade in Europe, disturbing the order of an extensively organized christian church, certainly appears strange and extraordinary. What moved him to such a course? What were his motives? What was his object? What were his anticipations? Is he a fanatic? Is he an enthusiast? Is he a designing intriguer, that has been forming a mine and laying a train, which he intends some day to fire and blow up Wesleyanism? What is he? Where shall we find a clew to his character?

To condemn Mr. Caughey for an unwarrantable invasion of British Wesleyanism, without examining and weighing his own account of himself, were not less anti-christian than disingenuous. As what he has done has not been in a corner, and what he has spoken has not been under a bushel, so what he has thought and felt has not been concealed within the sanctuary of his own bosom. He has not drawn a veil over his own principles and motives, nor kept the secret of his spirit's impulses to himself. On the contrary,

he has uttered all his heart, respecting his movements, to all the world. He has declared himself explicitly and fully. He has cast his declaration into imperishable type. All who will may read it.

Either he has uttered the truth, or he has attempted to palm falsehood upon his readers. His declaration has been made either in sincerity or in hypocrisy. He meant either to give a frank and faithful account of himself before both God and man, or he meant to lie, beguile, and deceive. Upon the one supposition he is an upright, simple-minded, godly and faithful minister of Jesus Christ: upon the other, what is he better than an incarnate devil? But what is there in his spirit, what in his behaviour, what in his ministry, to justify the latter supposition? And what conceivable end could he propose to himself? Let those answer that suspect him. If no answer can be found that will satisfy reason, common sense, and piety, then, in the name of consistency and common charity, let credit be given him for christian simplicity and godly sincerity.

And now let him speak for himself.

"You will remember our Conference of 1839 was held in the city of Schenectady, N.Y. That year I was appointed to Whitehall, N.Y. Shortly after I had my library and study furniture forwarded to my station.

"It was then I began seriously to reflect upon the propriety of choosing a wife, believing that "marriage is honourable in all men." I had travelled a number of years, studied hard, and expended all my time and strength in winning souls to Christ. My brethren approved of my intention. But while indulging in this purpose, for some reason I could not explain, my heart became very hard. The Lord seemed to depart from me; and that countenance, which had so often beamed upon me from above, and had daily, for many years, brightened my soul into rapturous joy, appeared to be mantled in the thickest gloom.

"The more I reflected thus, "I can see no good reason why I should be singular among my brethren, nor continue to lead this solitary life," my heart became harder, and my darkness increased. My will seemed to be in a conflict with something invisible. God, who had honoured me with such intimate communion with himself since my conversion, apparently left me to battle it out *alone*. So it appeared to me then; but now I see God himself was contending with me. I was about to step out of the order of his providence; and he was resolved to prevent it, unless I should refuse to understand why he thus resisted me. Had I continued the conflict, I believe he would have let me take my own course; nor would he have cast me off; yet I solemnly feel, he would have severely chastised my disobedience.

“My distress and gloom was so great, I could not unpack my library, nor arrange my study. I began to reflect most solemnly upon my unhappy state of mind, and became more concerned to regain my former peace and joy in God, than to obtain any temporal blessing whatever. The world was a blank, a bleak and howling wilderness to my soul, without the smiles of my Saviour. In fact, that I could not live, but must wither away from the face of the earth, without his comforting and satisfying presence. Like a well-chastised son, I came back to the feet of my heavenly Father, and with many tears I besought him to reveal his face to my soul; that if my purposes were crossing his, to show me; and whatever was his will, I would at once, by his help, yield my soul to it. “Lord God,” I said, “if my will crosses thy will, then my will must be *wrong*; for thine cannot but be *right*.” Now I cared not what he commanded me to do, or to leave undone; I stood ready to obey. I felt assured clear light from God on some point would soon reach my soul; and I was fully prepared for it; but I no more expected such an order as came soon after, than I expected he would command me to fly upward and preach the gospel in another planet. During three days I cried to God, without any answer. On the third day, in the afternoon, I obtained an audience with the Lord. The place was almost as lonely as Sinai, where Moses saw the burning bush. It was under open sky, a considerable distance from the habitations of men; steep rocks and mountains, deep forests, and venomous reptiles surrounding me. Here, and in a moment, the following passage was given me to plead:—*‘And the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him there, and proclaimed the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear the guilty.’* Exod. xxxiv. 5—7. I took hold of this; many of the words were as fire, and as a hammer to break the rocks in pieces before the Lord. The fountains of tears were opened, and the great deep of my heart was broken up. I left the place, however, without receiving any light; but my heart was fully softened and subdued, and I felt assured I had prevailed in some way with God. I was confident light and direction were coming; but of what nature I could not tell. This was on the 9th of July, 1839. The same evening, about twilight, eternal glory be to God! when reading in a small room adjoining my study, a light, as I conceived from heaven, reached me. My soul was singularly calmed and warmed by a strange visitation. In the moment I recognised the change; the following, in substance, was spoken to my heart; but in a manner, and with a rapidity, I cannot possibly describe. Every ray of divine glory seemed to be a word that the eye of my soul could read, a

sentence which my judgment could perceive and understand: 'These matters which troubled thee, must be let entirely alone. The will of God is, that thou shouldest visit Europe. He shall be with thee there, and give thee many seals to thy ministry. He has provided thee with funds. Make thy arrangements accordingly; and next Conference, ask liberty from the proper authorities, and it shall be granted thee. Visit Canada first, when this is done, sail for England. God shall be with thee there, and thou shalt have no want in all thy journeyings; and thou shalt be brought back in safety again to America.

"The above is far beneath the dignity and grandeur of the revelation. It came in a way which left no room for a doubt. A heavenly calm, a powerful persuasion, and an intense glow of divine love, accompanied the whole. It was like the breaking forth of the noon-day sun at midnight. I fell upon my knees before the Lord, my whole mind consenting to the orders, which I believed had come from heaven. Oh! the sweetness of that communion I then enjoyed with God! My sky was cloudless. My rest of soul unutterable. The meaning of many past providences was now explained. The possession of a few hundreds of dollars had often made me uneasy. I doubted the propriety of laying up treasure on earth. The cause of missions stood in need of what I possessed, but still I was restrained. Now I clearly saw that God had provided me with these funds, in order to make me willing to obey the call, and to save me from embarrassment in my travels. I could perceive a special reason, why I had pressed forward in my studies for so many years, and why revival texts and sermons had occupied so much of my time:—that God had been thus preparing me for a few campaigns in Europe.

"I arose from my knees under a strong conviction that God had called me to take this tour. Letters were written immediately to Canada, etc. The next day my soul was calm and happy. My books were unpacked, and every thing in my study arranged with a glad heart and free. Eleven months were before me to criticise the impressions on my soul. With delight I commenced my pastoral work, visited from house to house, and had the pleasure of seeing a most powerful revival of religion in my circuit. During this period, not the least wish entered my heart to form any *connexion* or *engagement* whatever, that would entangle or hinder me from fulfilling, what I conceived to be, the high and solemn commission I had received from the Lord. I continued to resign the whole matter to God, entreating him to overrule all to his glory, and to hedge up my way, if it were not his will I should leave America.

"The time for the sitting of Conference arrived. With solemn feelings I took my seat with my brethren. They were never dearer to my heart than now. At a proper time, I presented my

request to the Bishop. He made no objections, but immediately proposed it to the Conference. After a few moments deliberation, they seemed to have but one mind upon the subject; that I should have liberty to visit Europe. A resolution to that effect was passed, and that my name should continue to appear as usual on the printed minutes. One of the chief men of the Conference arose, and said, 'Having permitted brother Caughey to visit Europe, it is our duty to make his visit to those countries as pleasant to himself as it is in our power, I therefore propose that he have a recommendation from this body, to the Wesleyan Connexion in Great Britain and Ireland, signed by the Bishop and Secretary of Conference.' Adding, 'He will then appear among our brethren on the other side of the Atlantic, as an accredited Minister of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America.' This proposal was immediately acceded to, and submitted to the Bishop. He replied, that he had no objections, and requested me to wait upon him at his lodgings. I did so. He entered into conversation with the freedom and tenderness of a father. Never before did I see such majesty, connected with extreme age. His hair, white as snow, fell in graceful locks upon his shoulders; and his masculine mind, unimpaired by years, shone forth in company with a deep and glowing piety. I thought of St. Paul, of St. John, of one of the old patriarchs. I loved, admired, and revered him. After an interview of half an hour, in which the Bishop appeared to be greatly interested, he presented me with the following document:—

"TROY CONFERENCE.

"Middlebury, Vt, June 24th, 1840.

"Brother James Caughey having asked permission of the Conference to visit his friends residing in Europe,—

"On motion, it was resolved, That Brother Caughey's request be granted, and that he be so returned on the minutes.

"And it is hereby certified, that the said J. Caughey is in good standing in the Troy Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, in the United States of America; and, as such, is cordially commended to the Christian fellowship of the Wesleyan Methodist Connexion in Great Britain and Ireland.

"R. R. ROBERTS, President.

"J. B. HOUGHTALING, Secretary.

"TROY CONFERENCE."

"I have thus, dear Sir, in the simplicity of my heart, related to you my singular experience, and the circumstances which led me to take the course I have taken.

"That there are troubles before me, great and many, I cannot doubt; perhaps far more than is expressed in these lines:—

"Through a world of dangers led,
Through a wilderness of cares,
Through ten thousand, thousand snares,
More than now our hearts conceive,
More than I could know and live!"

"But I can say with the apostle, 'None of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I may finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' The constant cry of my soul is,—

"O lead me through the various ways,
My doubtful feet are doom'd to tread;
And spread thy shield's protecting blaze,
When dangers throng around my head!"

"With these feelings, and with this confidence, I hope to—

"Pass secure the watery flood,
Hanging on the arm of God."

"As to your other questions, all I can oppose to them is the above simple and sincere statement."

Such is the account given by Mr. Caughey of the exercises of his own heart and mind in which his career in the British Islands originated. What candid mind can deny its *simplicity*, or doubt its *sincerity*? Wears it not the garb of truthfulness? Presents it not the aspect of honesty? Bears it not the evidence of fidelity? Breathes it not the spirit of piety? To these interrogatories, each and all, my soul hesitates not to render an unqualified response in the affirmative. I could as soon suspect the sincerity of my own religious profession, or question whether I ever tasted that the Lord is gracious, or doubt the christianity of St. Paul, as believe the foregoing statement to be that of a hypocrite or a deceiver.

Does the reader admit Mr. Caughey's *sincerity*? If he does, let him proceed a step further. Either what Mr. Caughey has narrated was a real manifestation of God to his soul, and an intimation of the will of God concerning him, or it was a *delusion*. If the former, he has been obediently serving God according to his strength and ability, doing the work assigned him of the Lord: if the latter, he has been labouring *under* delusion and *from* delusion; doing the *work* of delusion, *infecting* with delusion tens of thousands of his fellow-men, and making thousands of upright, godly people, and some scores if not hundreds of christian ministers *tools* of an unexampled delusion, and that to an extent unparalleled in the history

of Methodism in any part of the world. Are those who impugn his proceedings prepared for this alternative? Do they really believe Mr. Caughey to be a deluded man, and all that has resulted from his movements during the past six years to be the fruit of delusion? Is that the reader's opinion? Can it be possible? Is it or not? If it is, I entreat him to give me his patient attention upon this point for a few minutes.

Were I addressing a sceptic, I would argue the philosophical possibility and reasonableness of the Father of Spirits making himself known and conveying an intimation of his will to the human soul: I would argue his right to command his own creatures, and his claim to the perfect submission of the will and understanding of man. But my readers are not sceptics. I assume that they are christian believers; that the bulk of them are Methodists; that the majority are Wesleyans. Brethren, let me speak to you freely. As Wesleyan Methodists, you believe that God doth manifest himself to the souls of his servants; that he makes his presence felt, his grace known, and that "*the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him*:" aye, and that in answer to prayer he does intimate his will to such as inquire, "Lord, what wouldest thou have me to do?" As Wesleyan Methodists, you are parties to an annual "Covenant," which instructs you, and is designed to assist you in the endeavour, to "Resign and deliver up yourselves to God in Christ?" intending and desiring

I. "That he appoint you your work."

II. "That he appoint you your station."

A "Covenant" in which you are required to say to your Redeemer, "Make me what thou wilt, Lord, and set me where thou wilt: let me be a vessel of silver or gold, or a vessel of wood or stone, so I be a vessel of honour: of whatever form or metal, whether higher or lower, finer or coarser, I am content; if I be not the head, or the eye, or the ear, one of the nobler and more honourable instruments thou wilt employ, let me be the hand, or the foot, one of the most laborious, and lowest, and most contemptible of all the servants of my Lord; let my dwelling be on the dunghill, my portion in the wilderness, my name and lot among the hewers of wood or drawers of water, or among the door-keepers of thy house: any-where, where I may be serviceable. I put myself wholly into thy hands: put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt, put me to doing, put me to suffering, let me be employed for thee, or laid aside for thee, exalted for thee, or trodden under foot for thee; let me be full, let me be empty; let me have all things, let me have nothing; I freely and heartily resign all to thy pleasure and disposal."

Pastors, officers, and people,—alike and *en masse* are parties to this annual engagement. Shall any thing cause you to renounce its principles, or to shrink from their consequences?

As Wesleyan Methodists you believe that you have not only a truly apostolic and divinely appointed ministry, but that your ministers are individually called of the Lord, being moved by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the office and work of the Christian Ministry: that God having intimated his mind to them, they offered themselves to the household of faith and to their fathers and brethren, by whom their pretensions were duly tested and their divine call was officially and solemnly recognized. You believe that any man exercising the ministerial function without these credentials, is an intruder into the sacred office, and will be dealt with as such by the Lord; but that whoever exercises that function, having these credentials, is doing the work and the will of God.

As Wesleyan Methodists, you believe that among Christian Ministers, various gifts for their work are distributed by the Holy Spirit. That “there are diversities of gifts, but the same spirit: differences of administrations, but the same Lord: diversities of operations; but the same God that worketh all in all.” That “the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal,” and that whatever gifts exist in the church, “all these worketh that one and the selfsame spirit, dividing to every man severally as he will.” 1 Cor. xii. 4—11.

As Wesleyan Methodists, you believe that God not only calls whom he will to the ministry, but also that he intimates his will to many of his servants as to where and in what manner they shall exercise their ministry. Upon this ground it is that not a few of your missionaries have been constrained to offer themselves for particular portions of the heathen world, and have been accepted and appointed in conformity with their own convictions. And on this principle your venerable founder went into the highways and hedges, streets, lanes, fields, and moors, any where and every where, throughout the three kingdoms and to foreign lands, refusing to be limited by ecclesiastical bounderies and collegiate laws, but claiming *the world for his parish*.

As Wesleyan Methodists, you are not unacquainted with Wesleyan literature, nor strangers to the fact that it furnishes numerous instances of persons shaping their general behaviour, and framing their character by the teachings of the bible, and at the same time religiously and laboriously acting upon such impressions as they believed to have been made upon their minds by the Spirit of God, in reference to some particular work or enterprise. Of this, indeed, many examples might be adduced from the *early* literature of most Christian denominations, as well as that of the Wesleyans; and the

instances appear only to diminish in number in proportion to the decline of primitive simplicity and zeal.

If then it is obligatory upon every Christian to yield himself without reserve to the divine disposal ; if pretensions to the ministry are legitimate only when based upon a divine call ; if divinely called ministers are divinely qualified by great diversity of gifts for corresponding diversity of service ; if it is the prerogative of God to assign to each of his servants a sphere of labour, and to signify to them his will as to the service they shall render ; and if it is a notorious fact that the most simple and zealous of God's servants of various denominations and at different periods, have acted upon the conviction that God had so signified his will to them ; why should it be thought a thing incredible that God should have intimated his will to Mr. Caughey, and commissioned him to lay aside his ordinary work, and to visit Europe on special service ? Why should it be imagined that he has been acting under the spell of delusion ?

Delusion !—What symptoms of delusion have characterized the work in which he has been engaged ? By his six years' labours in these realms, some thousands of souls have been "brought out of darkness into God's marvellous light." Is *that* delusion ? Many most abandoned livers and notoriously wicked characters have become thoroughly reformed, and "renewed in righteousness and true holiness." Is *that* delusion ? Many gospel hardened hearers, that had sat under the ministry of the Word in Wesleyan chapels for twenty years and more, proof against the ordinary weapons of war, have been beaten down, subdued, and become the willing captives of Christ. Is *that* delusion ? Many of the children of Methodist families, that were growing up wedded to the world and alienated in heart from the God and people of their fathers, have confessed the error of their ways, and rejoiced the hearts of their parents, and gladdened the church, by saying, "This people shall be my people and their God my God." Is *that* delusion ? Multitudes of our officers and people have been mightily shaken, and broken, and quickened, and have become abundantly "fruitful in all the fruits of righteousness, which are by Christ Jesus, to the praise and glory of God." Is *that* delusion ? Backsliders of every grade and shade, and in considerable numbers, have been arrested and restored, and started anew upon the heavenly course, along which they are now progressing with joyfulness. Is *that* delusion ? Are such effects as these to be attributed to delusion ? Are they not rather to be regarded as "the *fruits* of THE SPIRIT." Is it not the habit of Wesleyan Ministers to appeal to such fruits of their own labour as evidences of the validity of their own ministerial vocation ? Are not such evidences deemed conclusive ? Does not every apologist for Methodism consider his argument complete, triumphant, and unanswerable, when he has made this appeal ? Nay is it not an

apostolic argument? For Paul himself employed it; (See 1 Cor. ix. 2; 2. Cor. iii. 2; xii. 12.) If such effects are to be regarded as the *fruits of the Spirit* under the ministry of an apostle, and under the ministry of the Wesleyan Pastorate, must they not be so regarded under the ministry of Mr. Caughey? If the production of such fruits attested the legitimacy of the Apostle's claims, and if the same evidence substantiates the claims of the Wesleyan ministry, must it not be equally conclusive, when adduced in behalf of Mr. Caughey and in justification of his labours? If the evidence and arguments are *good* in behalf of Wesleyan Ministers, they are not less so in behalf of Mr. Caughey: but if worthless to him they are equally worthless to them, and if worthless to them, what becomes of the pretensions and claims of Wesleyan Methodism? In attributing Mr. Caughey's proceedings and their results to delusion, or denying the fruit of his labours to be a work of God, we sweep away the ground from Methodism itself, and leave the whole body of Wesleyan Ministers without an inch of authorized standing-room under heaven.

Some there are, however, who, while they shrink from blaspheming the work of the Holy Ghost connected with Mr. Caughey's instrumentality, take an instinctive alarm at his proceedings, and entertain insuperable objections against them on the ground of their *irregularity*. He has not acted Methodistically. He has invaded connexional order, and broke clean through the disciplinary arrangements of the body. He is beyond the reach of ecclesiastical control. To permit the continuance of such an irregularity is inconsistent with wholesome discipline, and hazardous to the connexional principle.

I grant there is something very formidable in this objection; so formidable that I do not wonder at right-hearted christian men, true ministers of the Lord Jesus Christ, being induced to give their voices against any minister obnoxious to such an objection. Formidable, however, as it may appear, I humbly submit that there are considerations that very materially modify, if they do not entirely neutralize it. I freely admit, as does Mr. Caughey himself, that his proceedings have been irregular, and that his entire case is a total anomaly in Methodism. I admit further, that the general prevalence of such irregularities would be utterly inconsistent with connexional order and ecclesiastical discipline. But whilst I make these admissions, I beg to ask, Have we yet to learn, or do we only need to revive in our recollections, what is universally held to be indisputably true, *that there is no rule without an exception*? I beg that it may not be taken offensively, if I assert, that Mr. Caughey is not an ordinary man. Let me explain—It is unquestionable that he possesses peculiar gifts for a peculiar work. He is not so adapted for the routine work of a circuit as some are, but he

is eminently adapted for special revival services. His talents are such as peculiarly fit him for working upon a wide surface, and within a moveable sphere: and in his own line of things, it is indisputable, that his labours have been crowned with signal success, the fruit of which, to a considerable extent, the Wesleyan church has been, and still is, reaping; and may, if it will, continue to reap. Upon common policy, therefore, and upon a universally admitted principle, in such a case as this, there might safely be a relaxation of the ordinary rigidity of ecclesiastical ligatures. Moreover if Mr. Caughey was, as he believes, called of the Lord to visit and labour in this country, if it has been his endeavour to obey the voice of God as uttered by his Word, his Providence, and his Holy Spirit, and if, as he professes, and as I, in common with thousands upon thousands firmly believe, his eye has been and is *single* in the whole matter, will it not follow as an infallible consequence, that his case is one of those that comes under the universal rule of *exception to ordinary rule*, and that the irregularity charged against him is not only allowable, but was unavoidable, and might safely have been permitted to pass without authoritative interruption?

It may be argued, If we allow one man to act irregularly, we must another: if we do not stop Mr. Caughey, we may have some young aspirant professing similar principles, and proceeding in a similar course, and shall not be able to stop *him*: in short, we must either put an end to the irregularity, or renounce our discipline. Excuse me: these consequences I must deny *in toto*. My argument is, that Mr. Caughey's is not an ordinary case, and that it cannot be brought under ordinary rule. But the discipline of the Wesleyan Connexion has been framed for ordinary cases, and its authorities have to deal with ordinary men, that is, men reared by themselves, under God, and men who upon avowed and acknowledged principles and laws have offered themselves for the service of the Connexion, a service of a known and accepted order, and have been received into its service, subject to all its disciplinary arrangements. It is obvious to any mind that can distinguish between things that differ, that such a case is as distinguishable from that of Mr. Caughey as solids are from fluids, or burnished metals from unfused ores.

That *order* is of God I do not deny: but so also are such extraordinary cases as fall without the range of established order. I see not how this position can be either negatived or neutralized. For hath the Holy One of Israel limited himself? He gave laws to *nature*, but has he not on various occasions both suspended and counteracted some of those laws? How else shall we account for the sun and moon becoming stationary for a whole day, or for the shadow of a sun-dial returning so many degrees, or for the fire of a furnace producing no effect upon the bodies and clothing of three men when thrown into it, or for any of the many other similar facts

recorded in the Word of God? And as He has not bound himself by the order of the natural world, so, neither is it supposable that he has by that of the Spiritual, much less by that which has been established in the church, by even wise and good men. How often, in the Jewish church and commonwealth, and even in the Patriarchal line, did the Lord prefer the younger before the first-born! Were not all these, instances of departure from established order? Does not the elevation of the Gentile church above the Jewish, partake of the same character? And what else was the apostolate of St. Paul? It is evident from his own writings that many of his contemporaries so regarded it; for he vindicates himself at large from insinuations against his apostolic character and authority. Such also was the career of Luther. And to come yet nearer home, such was the career of the venerated founder of Methodism. Ecclesiastical authorities would have fettered him. Why? Because he disturbed the peace of the church, and endangered its stability, such, at least, were their allegations. But no fetters could bind him. Why? Because he was impelled by a constraining power within. God had a great work for him to do. So he believed; and so the authorities of Methodism in all its sections profess to believe. And he was moved, guided, strengthened and blessed by the Spirit of the living God; so that when his work was done, he could exclaim with the same breath,

"I the chief of sinners am,
But Jesus died for me!"

And,

"The best of all is, God is with us!"

Why, Methodism itself, owes its very existence, and Wesleyan Methodism in particular, to a violation of established order, or rather, to that order of God which breaks through the order of man, *the exception to the rule* which has been before spoken of. Upon a more erratic thing than Methodism the sun never shone. Its founder, originally so bigoted to order that he would have thought it almost a sin to save a soul if it were not done according to order, and within the consecrated walls of a church, found existing order so inimical to spiritual work, and so little conducive to the salvation of souls, that he broke clean away from it, struck out a new course, and established a new ecclesiastical order, which has progressively become more distinctive and complete from the first recognition of its crudest elements to the present hour. When the authorities of so erratic a production set themselves in array against a movement that is manifestly owned and blessed of God, because of some deviation from existing order, a startling spectacle is presented to the contemplation of spiritually minded men, upon which I forbear to enlarge.

Let it not be supposed that I am arguing *against order*. I intend no such thing. I am a lover of order, and to the best of my knowledge I conform to it in all things. I desire to direct my arguments against the wrong application of order and the placing of it in a wrong position. What is it but a means to an end? For what does it exist but for the edification of the body of Christ? Ought then the means to be made *paramount* to the end, or *subservient* to it? Ought the end to be sacrificed to the means? Is church order of greater importance than church prosperity? Whether should order, under peculiar circumstances, bend to the work of God, or the work of God to order? With fear and trembling should any attempt be made to interfere with and check a work of God, on the plea of maintaining established order. *

As regards the case of Mr. Caughey, however, my argument upon *order* is almost gratuitous, and supererogatory. For though he has not been *formally* conformed to the order and subject to the discipline of Wesleyanism, he has been *virtually* so. For he could never occupy a Wesleyan pulpit without the permission of the representative of the Conference in charge of the pulpit. He could labour in no circuit without the sanction of its Superintendent. And every Superintendent had power to close every pulpit of his circuit against Mr. Caughey in case of his either doing or saying any thing inconsistent with the interests and objects of Methodism, whether locally or connexionally. Upon this point we can now adduce something more tangible than theory: for the fact is before the world that in consequence of the official interference of the President, several Superintendents *have* closed the pulpits of their circuits against Mr. Caughey. So far as their authority extends they have banished him from the pale of British Wesleyanism, *not*, be it remembered, for any offence committed by *him*, but in obedience to *superior* authority. In the face of such a fact who will venture to deny the *virtual* subjection of Mr. Caughey to the discipline of the connexion? Who will affirm that the discipline of Wesleyanism

* The Rev. Robert Hall being asked his opinion of the Ranters, the inquirer urging that they were *very irregular*, that eminently gifted man replied, "Was not our Lord's rebuking the Scribes and Pharisees, and driving the buyers and sellers out of the temple, *very irregular*? Was not almost all that he did in his public ministry *very irregular*? Was not the course of the Apostles and of Stephen, and of many of the Evangelists, *very irregular*? Were not the proceedings of Calvin, Luther, and of their fellow-workers in the Reformation, *very irregular*? A complete and shocking innovation upon all the quiescent doings of the papists! And were not the whole lives of Whitfield and Wesley *very irregular* lives, as you view such things? Yet how infinitely is the world indebted to all these! No, Sir: there must be something widely different from mere irregularity before I can condemn."

Dr. Gregory's edition of the Works of Robert Hall; Vol. 1. p. 172—173. Houldsworth, London, 1839.

cannot reach his case? If there is not the *semblance* of subordination there is the *reality*. If the *form* is not visible the *substance* is discoverable. In the absence of parade there is the presence of effectual power.

That there are some elements of Wesleyan discipline that cannot be brought to bear upon Mr. Caughey, must be admitted. There are no Connexional Funds upon which he has any claim, and from which he might be cut off. The chance of a prize in the lottery of circuits, and the consequent hope of advancement on the one hand, and dread of retrogression on the other, cannot affect him. Official distinction can offer him no inducements, supply him with no motives. And the consciousness that all personal interests for this world are bound up with a particular ecclesiastical system, can afford no guarantee in his case that he will faithfully and constantly carry out the whole policy of men with whom he is under obligation to co-operate for life. The position of Mr. Caughey in relation to British Methodism is not within play of any of these elements. By none of these, therefore, could he be reached. But has he not, nevertheless, a REPUTATION at stake? Has he not a place in the affections of many of his brother Ministers, and scores of thousands of christian people that is far more valuable to him than emolument and honours could be? Is not his status in the Methodist Episcopal Church of the United States of importance to him? And would not his status there be affected by any wrong doing on his part here? These, surely, are not inconsiderable guarantees for his consistency, and not powerless elements of that virtual discipline of which he is the subject, and by which he may be controled.

I hardly think it necessary to touch the question of Mr. Caughey's taking an English Circuit, and performing the ordinary routine of itinerant duty. He could not do so without passing through such a preliminary course as the safeguards of the Wesleyan constitution have provided, nor would he be allowed to do it without submitting to such restrictions as would be incompatible with his own convictions of duty and the plans upon which he has been accustomed to act in his revival campaigns. Besides, I see no reason whatever to believe that either he, or his friends, or his opponents *desire* it. And if they did, and if it were as much within the pale of practicability and likelihood as it is the contrary, the effect would be to terminate his wholesale usefulness, and almost universally to disappoint the thousands who admire and love him.

The action taken by the late Conference upon his case, is palpably indicative of a wish to be *quietly rid of him* if possible, and of a determination *forcibly to banish him* if necessary. It is evident that to a considerable number of the members of Conference, with the President at their head, he is personally offensive; and that to

a still greater number, his proceedings are either utterly distasteful and annoying, or, at least, seriously objectionable. Small indeed, is the probability that any of these will sanction his further toleration within their ecclesiastical territory. Their views, it is to be feared, are *fixed*; their policy *determined*. They cannot see that Methodism needs such services as his, or that it will derive ultimate benefit from them. It is felt that between him and themselves there is so much of contrariety, that if he is right, they, to some extent are wrong, and that to sanction him, especially after what has now transpired, would be to censure themselves.

I am not insensible to the delicacy of this point, the difficulty of approaching it with at once becoming modesty and the requisite boldness, the possibility of offending one party, and damaging the other, and the consequent risk incurred by touching it at all. But having incurred the responsibility of taking up the general question, to be silent upon this particular, would be a culpable omission. The condemnation of any party whatever is no part of my design: the vindication of Mr. Caughey and of that "work of the Lord" of which he has been the instrument, is a large part of it. It is of necessity, therefore, that some things objected against him be fairly looked in the face, although it may involve the notice of other things of a less gratifying character than might have been desired.

It has not been the habit of Methodism to disdain or reject aids and helps of any kind: and as for living instrumentality, it has accepted, combined, and directed, almost every available order of it. Why, then, should it not accept Mr. Caughey? Why should there be so much sensitiveness about his tardiness to quit England, and such uncommon anxiety for his withdrawal? What ground is there for any alarm about him; and what are the strong reasons for his banishment? Some reproach him for remaining in England so long after the expressed wish of the Conference for his departure, others vituperate his protracted peregrinations irrespective of the Conference Resolution, and others there are who do not hesitate to throw suspicion upon the fact of his having quitted American soil at all. These and a few other objections demand a calm and christian consideration.

"Why did Mr. Caughey quit America? If the pale of the Methodist Episcopal Church there was not wide enough for him, were there not souls enow upon that great Continent for whom no man cared? Could he not find scope enough for his genius among them?" Undoubtedly he might, had the Lord called him to that work. And might not every missionary who has left the British Islands, and is now labouring in heathen lands, have found abundance of work among the millions at home who are as ignorant, godless, and vicious as those among whom they are spending their strength? Yet what genuine believer will censure the course taken

by those "messengers of the churches and glory of Christ," or would recal them from their glorious toil? Besides, as it was a settled conviction of Mr. Caughey's mind that the Lord, whom he served, commanded him to Europe, who shall say to him, Thou hast sinned in obeying that conviction? "But why," it is asked, "should Mr. Caughey have come to England? Why have pushed himself upon the Wesleyans? What need was there for it? Suppose no other answer could be given to these questions than the statement of the facts that have been already adduced, that he has been instrumental in saving a great number of souls whom no other instrumentality had been found able to reach, numbering some of the vilest of the vile, infidels, gospel-hardened hearers, backsliders, and the children of Wesleyan families. I ask any candid, godly man, whether that is not answer enough? Are not the results a sufficient justification of the proceeding? And is not every christian bound to rejoice in these matters, and thank God on account of them? What other individual minister of the present generation can point to so large a number of living seals to his ministry? And where is the living man whose ministerial labours have produced such large accessions to so many branches of the universal church as have his, within so short a time? Whether he might or might not have been equally successful in America is not for me to say: but it is notorious that he has had almost unparalleled success here. And in all human probability, many of those whom the Lord has gathered into the fold by his hand, would have perished if he had never visited these shores.

As for the reiterated assertion that Methodism neither wanted nor needed him, I entreat those who make it, to pause and consider the matter. For what end does Methodism exist? Is it "*To spread christian holiness through the land,*" and *through all the world*? If so, does it not need, and ought it not to tolerate, aye and welcome, any thing and every thing, yes, and every person too, that may contribute to that end? Who will venture to negative this question? And is there any other way of spreading holiness among men than that of rescuing sinners from the power of sin and the grasp of the devil, bringing them to Christ, and keeping them in the pathway of obedient love? This is what Methodism professes to do. And this is what Mr. Caughey aims at doing, and what he *has* done and *is* doing, and longs and pants to do. In the grand object proposed, therefore, there is no difference between Methodism and Mr. Caughey. Of *his* success I have said sufficient: of the success of Methodism at large, it behoves me to say something. And I admit with joyfulness that the Lord has wrought wonders in the earth, and especially in Great Britain and America, by the instrumentality of Methodism. The brutality and ungodliness of all Christendom before the rise of Methodism, and at the period of its dawn, are matter of authentic history. The mighty change it has effected among millions of the population, and the extent to which

it has revolutionized the habits and maxims of large portions of society, and modified the social relations of different classes, are existing facts, palpable to the cognizance of all moderately informed minds. Nevertheless, if we judge of the efficiency of Wesleyan Methodism in the promotion of the great object under contemplation, by its numerical progress, we shall not find in its recent statistics such grounds for congratulation, as used to be found in former periods of its history.

"Small and feeble was the day" of early Methodism, and, for awhile, not very rapid was its progress. But after the lapse of a few years, it increased astonishingly and overspread the whole land, so that at the close of the last century it numbered in Great Britain alone, irrespective of Ireland and Foreign parts, 90,619 members. In twenty years' time this number was more than doubled, being 191,217, under the pastoral oversight of 700 ministers.

The following table, compiled from the annual printed "Minutes," will show its progress since then.

<i>Years.</i>	<i>No. of Members.</i>	<i>Increase or otherwise.</i>	<i>No. of Ministers.</i>	<i>No. of members to each minister.</i>	<i>Increase of members to each minist.</i>
1821	200,354	9,137	709	282	13*
1822	211,392	11,038	725	292	15½
1823	219,398	8,006	745	294	11
1824	226,939	7,541	777	292	10½
1825	228,646	1,707	811	282	2½
1826	231,045	2,399	814	284	3
1827	237,239	6,194	820	289	7½
1828	245,194	7,955	829	296	9¼
1829	247,529	2,335	842	294	2¾
1830	249,278	1,749	848	294	2
1831	249,719	1,127	846	295	1½
1832	256,272	6,553	883	290	7¼
1833	279,170	23,658	900	310	27
1834	291,939	1,209	922	317	1½
1835	290,988	951 dec.	952	306	1 dec.
1836	293,132	2,144	998	294	2¼
1837	292,693	439 dec.	1,001	292	½ dec.
1838	296,801	4,108	1,019	292	4½
1839	307,068	10,267	1,053	292	10½
1840	323,178	16,110	1,078	300	15½
1841	328,792	5,614	1,110	296	5¼
1842	326,727	2,065 dec.	1,093	300	1½ dec.
1843	331,024	3,943	1,105	300	3½
1844	337,598	6,574	1,129	300	6
1845	340,778	3,180	1,148	297	2½
1846	341,468	690	1,171	292	½

* Each year's increase or decrease is divided by the number of ministers given for the preceding year. The quotient gives the result of the labours of the ministers actually engaged in the work during that year.

This table is limited to Great Britain. The number of ministers for each year includes supernumeraries, but not ministers labouring abroad.

From these statistics it appears that in Great Britain, from the year 1820 to 1846, a period of twenty-six years, the members increased from 191,217 to 341,468; and the ministers, from 700 to 1,171: that the number of members to each minister has varied from 282 to 317, averaging somewhere about 290; and that the annual increase of members to each minister has varied from five-eighths to twenty-seven. The number of ministers in 1820 was 700, and in 1846 it was 1171. Take the average of these two numbers, say 936, and divide by that number, the increase of members during the twenty-six years, 150,251, which gives 160, the increase of members for each minister during the whole period, or $6\frac{1}{2}$ per annum, which exceeds the increase of every year since 1839 and 1840, being the Centenary year and its immediate successor.

Again, divide the 26 years into periods of five years, thus—

<i>Years.</i>	<i>No. of Members.</i>	<i>Increase.</i>	<i>Average No. of ministers</i>	<i>Increase for each minister.</i>	<i>Ann. increase for each minister.</i>
1825	228,646	37,429	738	50	10
1830	249,278	20,632	809	$25\frac{1}{2}$	$5\frac{1}{2}$
1835	290,988	41,710	882	$47\frac{1}{2}$	$9\frac{1}{2}$
1840	323,178	32,190	988	$32\frac{1}{2}$	$6\frac{1}{2}$
1845	340,778	17,600	1,091	$16\frac{1}{8}$	$3\frac{1}{4}$

From this tabular view it will be seen that the product of the period from 1840 to 1845 is little more than half the product of any corresponding period of the series, except the second: that it is only a third of the product of the first and third periods respectively, and that it is but a fraction above half the product of the annual average of the whole twenty-six years. And from the last year's "Minutes" it appears, as shown in the preceding table, that the increase of last year was only 690 members, or five-eighths to each of the 1,171 ministers employed; that is, an increase of *five* members, as the result of a whole year's labours of *eight* ministers. No other five consecutive years can be found that produced so small an increase to the body, excepting those five years embracing the period of the "Warrenite agitation," and the secession of the "Wesleyan Association," which immediately followed a year of unexampled increase, 1833, when 23,658 members were added, being the extraordinary proportion of twenty-seven to each minister.

Let us pause and ponder these facts. During the last twenty-six years the number added to British Wesleyanism averaged $6\frac{1}{2}$ per annum, for every minister wholly devoted to the work. During the last six years the addition has been only $2\frac{1}{4}$ per annum for each minister; and the increase of the last year was only $\frac{5}{8}$ for each minister. Will such a change in the ratio of its progress justify the boast that the labours of Mr. Caughey were neither needed nor desired? Were it not that some thousands of souls have been added by his ministry during the last five years, the statistics that have been produced would have presented a yet more lamentable result than

they do; and if his converts were not counted, there would appear an actual *decrease* upon the statistics of the last year of all. In such a position of things it is really lamentable and grievous that ecclesiastical order should be deemed of sufficient consequence to warrant the ejection of so eminently successful a minister as Mr. Caughey, and the consequent termination of so signal a work of grace as that which has resulted from his labours.

It is a fearful thing for a body of christian ministers to find the work of God stationary under their hands, and doubly alarming to find it retrograding. If any Wesleyan minister can contemplate such a circumstance without trembling of heart and deep humiliation before God, his own spiritual state must be desperate and awful in the extreme. I would fain hope that such a one cannot be found. And yet I feel it difficult to reconcile such a state of soul with a forwardness to smite and banish a fellow-servant of the One Lord, and to arrest a great work of God by the strong arm of ecclesiastical power. If a pure and ardent love to souls and concern for their salvation prevailed beyond a regard for connexional order and official authority, would not both the man and the work be hailed with holy gladness, and every effort be made to reap as large a harvest of souls as possible from such a season of gracious visitation and productive irregularity? Is it possible that the Lord Jesus would be displeased with any church for permitting an irregularity so productive of spiritual fruit, or that he will approve and reward an authoritative suppression of efforts fraught with so signal an amount of varied good?

During the present century, Methodism in Great Britain has increased 265.78 per cent. Its increase from 1800 to 1840 was 256.63 per cent. On referring to the population tables of the census taken in 1841, I find that the population of Great Britain increased 72.21 per cent. from 1801 to 1841. During that period, therefore, Wesleyan Methodism increased at a ratio $3\frac{1}{2}$ times as great as the population. Dividing this into smaller periods, the relative increase of the two appears as follows.

BRITISH POPULATION.		BRITISH WESLEYANISM.	
<i>Years.</i>	<i>Increase per cent.</i>	<i>Years.</i>	<i>Increase per cent.</i>
1801 to 1811	15.1	1800 to 1820	111.0
1811 to 1821	14.2	1820 to 1830	30.36
1821 to 1831	14.0	1830 to 1840	29.64
1831 to 1841	13.2	1840 to 1846	5.66
1841 to 1847 not ascertained.			

In my statistics of British Wesleyanism I have thrown the first twenty years of the present century into one period, in consequence of having no authentic documents in my possession that would enable me to divide it, and having failed in my endeavours to obtain such. The printed "Minutes" did not formerly contain connexional

statistics, nor were they given in sufficient detail and with sufficient accuracy for some years after their first introduction. A glance at the above tables will show that while the population increased 15.1 per cent, during the *first* decennial period, and 14.2 during the *second*,—Wesleyanism increased during the *two* periods 111 per cent., or in a ratio $3\frac{1}{4}$ times as much as that of the population. During the *third* period its ratio of increase was little more than *twice* as much as that of the population. The *fourth* period gives $2\frac{1}{4}$ times as much. But the period from 1840 to 1846, that is, the last *six* years, shows an increase of only 5.66 per cent., being about one per cent., per annum; whilst the population, taking the average of the preceding 10 years as its index, has increased at the rate of 1.37 per cent., per annum, or about a third more than Wesleyanism. The rate of Wesleyan increase in proportion to population increase, has consequently declined to about a fifth of what it was forty years ago. I solemnly commend these matters to the diligent and prayerful consideration of the ministers of the body, and especially those of them to whom its multifarious business is committed. There must be a cause, and there may be several causes for the novel and humiliating fact that Wesleyan Methodism fails to keep pace with the population of Great Britain. The latter is increasing about 700 * per diem, or as much as the former is increasing per annum: and whilst the increase of the population is progressive, that of Wesleyanism is retrogressive. To what cause or causes is this state of things attributable?

A partial answer perhaps may be found in the recent resuscitation of externalism in England, and in the vigorous efforts which both the clergy and the laity of the Establishment have made and are making for the recovery of the lower and middle classes from the influence of Non-conformity. But in the face of these facts, we have the boldly out-standing fact of hundreds of souls being gathered to Christ and to Wesleyanism, in the course of a few weeks, in every place where the labours of Mr. Caughey have been for that length of time permitted. **THIS PROVES THAT WE HAVE YET A LARGE POPULATION IN ENGLAND THAT MAY BE REACHED AND RESCUED FROM SIN AND MISERY BY WESLEYAN METHODISM, IF APPROPRIATE MEANS BE EMPLOYED.** But it will not be done by commonplace sermonizing, or by the mere routine of *ordinary duty*.

Waiving, however, this enumeration, there is another point which presses upon my mind, to which I request attention. Great as the progress of Wesleyan Methodism has been, until within a few years, numerically,—it has made even greater progress financially, and in its consolidation and power of concentration. In these qualities it is unrivalled in all Christendom. But I appeal to every man bearing the Wesleyan name, whether these properties have not a tendency to destroy its elasticity and buoyancy; and whether, there-

* From 1831, to 1841, it averaged 603. At present it can scarcely be less than 700. Including Ireland it exceeds 1000.

fore, it be not indispensable to its healthy activity that occasional disturbing forces be allowed to break in upon it from without, and to infuse into it new elements of energy and vigour, or at least to arouse those that may exist within in a dormant state? A relaxation of the ligatures of the body, not a severe tension, is required to a free circulation, to buoyant activity, and to energetic toil. Rigidity is as bad as paralysis. Whoever inflicts either upon the body of Christ will surely disqualify himself from rendering his final account with joy? With these views, I regard Mr. Caughey's proceedings as a movement of health and of power in relation to British Methodism, and on these grounds I deprecate and deplore the jealousy, distrust, and displeasure with which he has been treated. Had his anomalous career been cordially tolerated for a few years, it is probable that an impetus would have been given to Methodism, far surpassing any other of the present century.

In support of this probability an appeal might be made to the history of revivals generally, and to those of our own church especially. It may be sufficient however to refer the reader to several articles of revival intelligence contained in the "Wesleyan Methodist Magazine, for 1843. p. 591—600. There are seven communications from as many circuits. One of them is from Leeds, from the pen of the Rev. Thomas Harris, Leeds third circuit, dated June 9th, 1843. This, as well as several of the others, speaks of "special (religious) services," held for the specific "purpose of promoting a revival of the work of God." The following passages in this document are commended to the reader's notice. "During the early part of the month of May we were favoured with the assistance of the Rev. James Caughey, from the United States of America. His labours have been greatly owned of God to the St. Peter's congregation, during the fortnight he remained with us. In addition to his Sabbath labours, he preached four times each week. The word has been with power in the awakening of sinners, but especially in quickening our members to seek for entire sanctification."

"Near one hundred members, who were not clear in their evidence of justification, have sought and found this blessing. Upwards of forty backsliders have been reclaimed; and about fifty persons brought to God out of the world. These did not belong exclusively to St. Peter's circuit. As near as we are enabled to judge, seventy of our members, including Preachers, Local Preachers, and Leaders, have witnessed that, through simple faith in the blood of Christ, God has cleansed their souls from all sin, and sanctified them wholly to himself."

"When we have risen from our knees, (*occupied in silent prayer*.) many persons have come forward and united with the penitents in seeking salvation. Mr. Caughey closed his labours with us on Saturday evening, the 20th, ult.; on which occasion we opened our old chapel for the usual band meeting, the large gallery of which was well filled. Many delightful testimonies were borne by old

members and new converts, particularly those who, during the fortnight's special services, had experienced that the blood of Christ cleansed them from all sin. Several old leaders and local preachers confessed they had hesitated, through shame, to go and kneel among those who were seeking a clean heart; but that they no sooner took up their cross, and thus publicly confessed Christ, than an indelible softening, melting influence came over them; and they were enabled with the heart to believe unto righteousness, and with the mouth to make confession unto salvation."

Of the same complexion with these extracts, are the resolutions passed by the Quarterly Meetings of Hull, Sheffield, Birmingham, York, Nottingham, and Huddersfield; and the special meetings of Wesleyan officers, and friends of Mr. Caughey, convened at Sheffield and Birmingham, from different parts of the kingdom; as given in "The whole Case Stated," and "The Merits of the Case," by "A Wesleyan Methodist." In opposition, however, to this mass of varied but unanimous testimony, Mr. Caughey's opponents allege that his converts soon fall away; that when sought they are not to be found; that whatever good may have been accomplished by him, has been more than counter-balanced by the evil that has accompanied and followed it; that he has recourse to *trickery*; that he is a mere pretender; and that it will be no small service to Methodism to rescue it from his influence.

Had I either seen or heard any thing to convince me of the truth of these allegations, I would sooner cut off my right arm, than wield the pen in his defence. Rather should my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, than vindicate his character, or plead his cause. But I declare before the Most High, that I have not. I have been with him repeatedly, both in public and in private. I have heard him preach, and witnessed his proceedings at different towns. I have observed him in the preparatory meeting, the ministration of the Word, the meetings for prayer and those for experience, the social circle, and the retreat of solitude. I have listened to him, worked with him, conversed with him. I have taken knowledge of his speech, labour, spirit. I have seen nothing in him or about him that becometh not the Gospel of Christ; nothing unbecoming the minister of Jesus.

That some of whom it was hoped that they were saved by his ministry, have fallen away, is an undoubted fact. But does not the same fact hold good of every faithful minister of Christ, of every one indeed having ministerial fruit? Have not thousands upon thousands fallen away from Methodism? Nay, do they not fall away by hundreds, and sometimes by thousands in a year? Let the Schedules answer? Did not thousands of the converts of the Wesleys and of Whitfield fall away? Nay, did not a far greater number of apostolic converts, and even the converts of our Lord fall away than continued faithful unto death? And would it not astonish all the churches of the realm to hear of a revival without a

subsequent declension? The most excitable natures are first and most affected by revivals: and many of these, having no root in themselves, endure but for a time. When the cause passes away, the effect ceases. The excitement being over, if nothing better existed, nothing remains. But when the excitement ushers in a divine agent and a thorough work of grace is wrought, it is seen after many days.

Moreover, of the persons believed to have obtained justification, as well as those cleansed from sin, under the ministry of Mr. Caughey, a considerable proportion were members of our own body, and a good number more belonged to other churches, and so continued. Others there were, too, who came from distant towns and villages, and other circuits. It is obvious, therefore, that of the numbers professing to obtain salvation, only a minority, and that perhaps but small in some cases, would appear as a permanent addition to the number of members in the circuit where the special services were held.

In some cases, too, Ministers under whose sanction Mr. Caughey had laboured, and under whose fostering care revival fruits had been preserved, have had to quit their flocks and leave them under the care of others. In such cases, have they always been followed by men like-minded with themselves? Are there not instances of their being followed by men of another spirit, unfriendly to revival efforts, suspicious of Mr. Caughey's motives or jealous of his popularity, and distrustful of his friends and his converts? And how is it possible that the numbers should be kept up under such circumstances? Let pastors treat any portion of their flocks with coolness, reserve, distrust, and insult, and it will be wonderful indeed if those who are so treated do not either abandon religion altogether or seek refuge in another church. Indeed if Ministers do not live in the spirit of their duty, if they think much of the work they have to do, and are glad of any excuse for neglecting an appointment, or delivering it over to be supplied by whatever substitute may be within their reach—if they prefer their own ease and indulgence to feeding the flock and recovering the lost—in a word, if the saving of souls is not more to them than their necessary food, the work of God *cannot* prosper in their hands, but must inevitably go down, whether a revival have immediately preceded or not.

I am not able to give the statistical records of the revival services held in different towns by Mr. Caughey, but a reference to the "Minutes," while discovering some degree of statistical fluctuation in the places visited by him, brings out numerical results sufficient to silence calumny and detraction, and to challenge connexional gratitude.

The following places comprise the principal of those in which he has been permitted to carry out his plans in England.

		1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	When visited.	Gross increa	Incre p.cent
Liverpool,	{ North,	1,173	1,270	1,400	1,456	1,468	1842—3	404	13.0
	{ South,	1,923	1,896	2,100	2,125	2,175			
	{ First,	1,912	1,962	2,197	2,116	2,112	1843—4	529	7.0
Leeds,	{ Second,	1,970	1,870	2,000	2,004	1,972			
	{ Third,	2,050	1,957	2,116	2,016	1,916			
	{ Fourth,	1,763	1,785	1,790	1,773	1,776			
Hull,	{ East,		1,516	1,758	2,000	2,054	1843—4	935	30.0
	{ West,		1,591	1,600	2,042	1,881			
Sheffield,	{ West,		2,156	2,160	2,671	2,676	1844	864	20.0
	{ East,		2,178	2,147	2,500	2,550			
Huddersfield,			2,212	2,274	2,481	2,820	1844—5	546	24.0
York,				2,855	2,850	3,060	1844	210	7.36
Chesterfield,				780	900	1,130		230	25.55
Birmingham	{ West,			1,669	1,639	1,691	1845—6	146	4.64
	{ East,			1,500	1,501	1,595			

The increase in Leeds and Hull has not been fully maintained. In every other place it has been progressive, without any diminution. For some of the places the increase indicated is that of one Methodistical year; in others, it ranges over two years. With the exception of Birmingham, whose harvest of souls is only partially apparent in the above table, the increase was nowhere less than seven per cent. upon the previous numbers, and in some places it reached between twenty and thirty per cent., whilst the aggregate increase of the whole Connexion, in Great Britain, for the last six years, as has been already shown, averaged only three and a-quarter per cent. per annum. The increase in Birmingham at the Michaelmas Visitation was 663, being more than twenty-one per cent.

Of the 6,574 members added to British Wesleyanism in the year ending March 1844, no fewer than 1,114, being more than a sixth of the whole, were in circuits in which Mr. Caughey laboured. Of the 3,180 added in 1845, as many as 1,548, being almost *half* the whole number, were in circuits in which he laboured. And in 1846, which yielded a gross increase to the Connexion of 690, the circuits in which he laboured yielded 925, being just enough to save the Connexion a gross decrease of 235. Of the fruit that has been gathered where he has laboured during the current year, I am not able to speak at present, with the exception of one circuit. He has not "laboured in vain, nor spent his strength for nought," at Lincoln, Boston, Sunderland, Scarborough, Ashbourne, Mansfield, and other towns. As for Nottingham, where the Ministers of one of the circuits treated him as "*man and a brother*," whilst the working officers rallied round him and carried out his measures with a cordiality and unanimity not to be surpassed, the prosperity, both spiritual and financial, of that circuit, is unprecedented. His first

sermon in Nottingham was preached in Wesley Chapel, in the North circuit, on Sunday, May 10th, 1846. At the March Visitation, the whole circuit numbered 1,610 members. At the Christmas Visitation, the numbers were 933 in the country, and 1,017 in the town, making a total of 1,950, being an increase of 340, or twenty-one per cent., besides a large number on trial.* A judicious prudence, in not hastily admitting to full membership all who have been brought into Christian fellowship during the revival, causes the increase to appear considerably less than it might have been shown to be.

From a manuscript record of the fruits of the whole series of special services held in Nottingham, from Sunday, May 10th, to Friday, June 12th, inclusive, the following analytical summary has been obtained.

NORTH CIRCUIT.				SOUTH CIRCUIT.				TOTAL.
<i>Appointed to Classes.</i>		<i>Previously in Classes.</i>		<i>Some members, others not.</i>		<i>belong other church</i>	<i>From a distan.</i>	
<i>Town</i>	<i>Circuit</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>Circuit</i>	<i>Town</i>	<i>Circuit</i>			
533	139	215	146	118	110	337	367	1965

Many obtained spiritual good in these services whose names were not recorded at the time; but, as might be expected, some of those whose names were taken could not be found; and others, it may be feared, were only temporarily impressed, and so shrunk from their engagements. Some, however, there were who joined society, of whom no record had previously been made. The summary made up to Quarter Day, June 29th, presents the following results:

<i>Joined classes.</i>	<i>To other societies.</i>	<i>Declin.</i>	<i>Not found.</i>	<i>Undecided and not seen</i>	<i>Left town.</i>	<i>Old memb.</i>	TOTAL.
399	28	29	36	60	9	6	567

By this it appears that 399 persons were united to the town society alone as candidates for full membership. Subsequent visits of Mr. Caughey have also been blessed to the salvation of souls and the enlivening of the church, of which I am unable to furnish statistical results. The above particulars, however, are sufficient evidence that his labours in Nottingham have been made an extraordinary blessing to many hundreds of souls. It is a cordial to the heart to hear the expressions of gratitude to God that fall from the lips of many of them, that ever they saw his face and heard his voice.

Financially as much as spiritually has the Nottingham North Circuit been improved by the revival. Although a third Minister

* During the whole of Mr. Caughey's sojourn in Nottingham he was not allowed to occupy any pulpit in the *South* Circuit. The number in that Circuit in March, was 1437. At Christmas there was no increase; a few had been gathered by the revival services of the other Circuit, but others had been drawn from the society of the South Circuit, to the more congenial elements of the North Circuit.

with a family was appointed to the circuit by the last Conference, the income has exceeded the expenditure by a larger amount than when provision had to be made for only two Ministers and their families; the immense debt upon the chapel and dwelling-house has been reduced to the extent of some hundreds of pounds; the pews being all let, the current income from the pew-rents has been improved from £10. to £12. a quarter; and nearly every religious and charitable institution of the town-society has been similarly benefited.

It is not affirmed that this prosperity, or that of other places where Mr. Caughey has laboured, is wholly attributable to his individual labours. On the contrary, it is granted that he neither could nor would have achieved much had not he been well supported by the Ministers, Leaders, Stewards, and others, on the ground cultivated by him. And I have heard it also publicly admitted by himself, that he had come in and reaped, in many instances, what other men had sown; still, it must be granted, that had he not come in, much, perhaps most of what he has reaped, would have remained ungathered. And though it has been urged in disparagement of his success, that the *power* connected with his public services was attributable to the prayers and faith of the people co-operating with him rather than to his ministrations, it is certain that no other man in our day has been able to call out and associate with himself such prayer, faith, and power, to any thing like the same extent as he has done. Let men be found who can carry the living instrumentality of the church along with them in a similar manner, and we shall witness similar effects. Those who cannot, will never benefit themselves or the church by indulging in *the sin of detraction*.

Some of the objections that have been urged against Mr. Caughey, are of so pitiful and paltry a character, that silence respecting them is really the best compliment the writer can pay those who have resorted to them. There is, however one that is of some weight, namely, that wherever Mr. Caughey comes the ordinary machinery of Methodism gets thrown out of gear—schools and classes are extensively neglected—and his services swallow up every thing else. To some extent, perhaps, such neglect is an unavoidable concomitant of a series of special services. Nevertheless it invariably meets with discountenance and reproof from Mr. Caughey, and it is to be hoped, does not continue beyond its temporary cause; if it does, it indicates a morbid condition, demanding prompt and skilful spiritual treatment. Such has *not* been the fact in the Nottingham North Circuit.

I have heard it said that the people are spoiled for hearing other ministers, by hearing Mr. Caughey; and that it is most undesirable to have to follow him. Of this, I beg to say, I have seen no proof, but I have seen abundant proof of the contrary. The people belonging to Wesley Chapel, Nottingham, have not been spoiled for

hearing their own ministers: for never had that house of prayer such congregations before Mr. Caughey's coming as since: and I have yet to learn that the fact is otherwise in any of the places visited by him in the neighbourhood. That his ministry will spoil people for a dull, dead, lazy, formal, *fruitless* ministry, I can readily believe; and who ought to be sorry at that? But for a lively, searching, earnest, wounding, healing, *saving* ministry, as facts abundantly prove, *his* will whet them to a keener edge. Should the time ever come when the Wesleyan Ministry shall *generally* have lost the latter qualities, its value to mankind will have past away; let it then perish from the earth: but so long as it retains them may it live before the Lord! Destroy it not; for a blessing is in it. Divested of these qualities, its ecclesiastical organization would be a curse to the world; but, retaining them, it may yet be an incalculable blessing.

This, indeed, is the sensitive point with the most attached friends of Mr. Caughey. They have regarded him as the personification of an active spiritual ministry, divinely commissioned to arouse the drowsy Methodism of Britain. They have looked at the blow struck at him as levelled against revivalism as much as against irregularity and encroachment. Hence, its effect does not terminate upon its object; but is *felt* where, perhaps, was least intended: and operates in a way, perhaps, least expected, so that its tendency is to alienate affection and sever connexion from the power by which it was inflicted. The same remarks apply to individual ministers who have either manifested direct hostility to Mr. Caughey, or dealt in small-talk to his disadvantage. Instead of serving the cause of God, or promoting the interests of Methodism; the effect has been to make their own way rough, seriously to damage if not wholly to neutralize their own usefulness, and to generate and foment that very animosity and incipient schism which constituted the ground of confederal action against Mr. Caughey.

With regard to the honoured individual whose exertions have given rise to so much hostility and commotion, that which has happened may have been divinely ordered "to humble and to prove" him, and to show him what was in his heart, lest he "should be exalted above measure." With regard to his friends, it may have been designed to teach them the necessity of depending less upon man and more upon God. And with regard to Conference and its immediate agents, I forbear. Let those that are most implicated in whatever has been either done or said discordantly with "the mind of the Spirit," spell out their own lesson. And "the Lord give (them) understanding in *all things*!"

With a deeply pained, and solemnly affected mind, have these pages been penned. Be their defects what they may, they are laid at the feet of him who readeth the heart, in hope that he may in such away as he pleaseth, make them contributory to his own glory, and the good of his church. Amen.