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SCOTTISH
METHODISM.

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THE CASE
OF
SCOTTISH METHODISM

IMPARTIALLY CONSIDERED,

BEING A CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS SOLVING THAT
IMPORTANT AND DIFFICULT QUESTION.

MOTTO—"GRADATIM."



BY THE
REV. PETER PRESCOTT,
PETERHEAD.

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SCOTTISH METHODISM.

“It is certain that Methodism is a child of Providence. Our fathers set out with no pre-arranged system of church government. They started under the guidance of God with one purpose—to spread Scriptural holiness throughout the land. Many arrangements were forced on them providentially, and adopted as necessary to its stability and permanence. *They never tied up their hands.* They had to abandon often their old High Church notions and prejudices ; but they held themselves free as to any mode of accomplishing their work. And whether it was in the synagogue, or by the way-side, in the church, or in the conventicle, Methodism has been a consistent exemplification of the saying,—‘CHARITY IS ABOVE RUBRICS!’ The Methodism of the future ! With whom does the responsibility of perpetuating this great work rest ? My younger brethren, allow me particularly to address my remarks to you. With you, mainly, does it rest—on you, chiefly, does it depend whether the work of God shall flourish or decay—shall live or die. . . . And may we not gather from the New Testament, that *no church can live that is not aggressive*, and no church can die that is intent on saving souls ?”—*Extract from OFFICIAL SERMON of the REV. JOHN FARRAR, EX-PRESIDENT of Conference, delivered July 30th, 1855.*

“IMPARTIALITY” is the quality which the writer has most especially sought to acquire and exer-

cise in reference to the affairs of Methodism in Scotland. This is a quality which demands practical sympathy both with Scotland as a country, and with Methodism as existing here; and to the attainment of that sympathy actual residence in the country for some length of time is highly conducive, *if, indeed, it be not absolutely essential*. When the writer was appointed at the Conference of 1851, to the Airdrie Circuit—a circuit comprising almost the entire extent of country between Edinburgh and Glasgow, and uniting, in fact, the difficulties of an English, with those of a Scottish circuit—he felt deeply and painfully the condition of that and all circuits north of the Tweed. Their condition was a burden upon his mind; a burden which impelled him to the continual study of the subject, and to the endeavour to trace the operation of the causes at work which have produced so deplorable a state of things. To this study he devoted the greater portion of his available time during the three years of his residence there. St. Paul says, “If any man be ignorant, let him be ignorant,”—let him know his ignorance, and not pretend to knowledge which he does not, and, in the nature of things, cannot possess. This maxim he endeavoured to make the stand-point from which he commenced his researches; the only stand-point from which such researches can be com-

menced with any rational hope of arriving at a correct and satisfactory result. He applied himself, of course, to the perusal of all Methodist documents within his reach, which bear upon the subject, including *Mr. Wesley's Journals and Letters*, and the entire body of Minutes, so far as they relate to the case in hand; and also sought, by intercourse with the ministers and members of our own and other Christian denominations, to look at the subject from every possible point of view. The result is presented in these pages, in brief outline. It might easily be presented in a much more extended form—perhaps more easily than in its present form; but in this busy age, whatever claims or invites attention must be presented, if possible, with due conciseness, as well as with due clearness.

The grave responsibility attaching to any attempt to set forth a scheme for dealing with the ecclesiastical affairs of Methodism in Scotland or elsewhere, has caused the writer to pause until he felt *constrained* to give utterance to his deeply cherished convictions, and now he gives utterance to his convictions with regard to the necessity of a scheme being prepared by competent authority, with most unfeigned diffidence. But the time seems to be fully come, when all who know anything of the subject and think upon it, have reached, or are fast reaching, the conclusion,

that the present state of things ought either to be mended or ended ; that its condition, hovering between life and death, is such as must be terminated, and will, at no distant day, terminate itself, unless vigorous and effectual measures be resorted to for its renovation.

The sum-total of the "Contribution" which the writer proposes to make "towards solving the important and difficult question" under review, amounts to this, *to stir the question EFFECTUALLY*; and in order to this, not to stir its surface merely, which has frequently been done already, and without result, but to stir its depths. Had not this been requisite, no expression of opinion on any of the points discussed would have been given; although, in point of fact, no jot or tittle of what is here advanced, is advanced without having been weighed, —deliberately, prayerfully, and most repeatedly. He is perfectly persuaded, that when the collective wisdom of Conference is brought to bear upon this question, it will be definitively settled, as all other questions of importance have been settled hitherto,—in harmony with the glorious mission of Methodism—"to spread scriptural holiness." It is his hope and confident expectation, that when the question is thus stirred, the business of preparing a scheme adequate to the magnitude of the interests involved, will be spontaneously undertaken by some one or more

of his ministerial fathers and brethren, whose age and experience invest them with the requisite fitness ; and, should this be the result, no one can possibly regret that these pages have seen the light.

The motto "*Gradatim*," affixed to the title-page, and which may be freely rendered as equivalent to the Old English proverb, "Make haste slowly," the reader is desired to carry in his mind throughout the whole of these remarks to their close ; as it is intended to exert a modifying influence upon all and everything here stated. That modification is sometimes expressed, but must be understood to be everywhere implied. Its force amounts to this :— That no change which can be made can be for the better, unless it be made *gradually* ; and that, not only because it is true in the general, that changes made in a church or nation must be gradual, else a re-action is produced, which makes things worse than before ; and, also, because the evils which afflict Methodism in this country have acquired a chronic and complicated character, and must be dealt with accordingly ; but, also, because any change made, must be made in accordance with the genius and temperament of the people, one of whose great characteristic qualities is caution. Hence also arises the necessity of intimacy with the people, in order

to arrive at a true and thorough acquaintance with their views and feelings; such intimacy as demands residence in the country.

What, then, is the real source of the difficulties with which we have to contend in Scotland? To the writer, it appears to be this:—THE APPLICATION OF ENGLISH IDEAS TO SCOTTISH AFFAIRS. *It is not Scriptural ideas; it is not Methodistic ideas; it is ideas which are English to which reference is made. The Scottish temperament and feeling of nationality in collision with the English temperament and nationality—that collision and the evils thence resulting constitute the sum-total of our difficulties; that is, of such difficulties as effectually avail to prevent Methodism from becoming a self-supporting and influential church.*

It is now upwards of a century since Methodism was introduced into Scotland. During that period it has been extending itself with mighty power and efficiency throughout the world. Proceeding from England, it has planted itself in Ireland, in the United States, in the Canadas, in France, in Australia, and in our extensive Mission-field; so that, we may almost say, “the sun never sets on” Methodism. This being the case, we might well have supposed, that in Scotland, “the most Protestant country

on the face of the globe," it would have found a congenial soil, and that, in this favoured land, it would have flourished exceedingly. What, then, is its present condition? The number of ministers in the District, which does not include Dumfries, is 20; the number of members, 2,185;—47 more than are contained in the Bolton circuit, which has 5 ministers, and about 800 more than are to be found in the Shetland Isles, which also have 5 ministers. It is not to be supposed that all the good which has been wrought, is adequately represented by these statistics; much good has been accomplished by its indirect influence in diffusing a leaven of spirituality, since many of our converts have entered into, or remained in connection with, other Churches. And yet, on the other hand, its indirect influence must not be unduly magnified, much less must we make it a cloak to hide from ourselves our responsibility to the Great Head of the Church; since, beyond doubt, the indirect influence of every Church must, humanly speaking, be in proportion to its direct influence; and, could Methodism raise itself to the level of other Churches, and take its stand by their side, its influence must in every way be immensely augmented. While, therefore, we would gratefully acknowledge the good which has been wrought by its instrumentality, the fact which

cannot be denied nor disguised, remains, that as an ecclesiastical body it barely exists, and is for that bare existence dependent upon aid from England.

At no period did Methodism ever number so many as 4000 members ; not even in those days of false prosperity, created or fostered by injudicious chapel-building. And as the last-mentioned point has been touched upon, it will be sufficient to say, that it is quite possible to impute too large an amount of our want of success to that cause. The history of Methodism, in general, before that period and since, most abundantly shows that other causes, much more potent, must have been in operation ; also, other churches in Scotland, as well as in England, have been able to surmount difficulties of a much more formidable character. The cause now adverted to must, in fact, take rank among the incidental, not the essential causes of our want of prosperity. A cause slight and trivial in itself, when concurring in its results, with those of a more powerful sort, will sometimes appear to produce effects which do not in reality proceed from it ; as the last straw, when placed on the back of the already fully-laden camel, is said to cause it to be overburdened, and to refuse to rise.

“ Let Methodism *be* Methodism ! ” it is said by some ;—“ don’t mend our system, but work

it." Let us examine this *dictum*, and see what it amounts to. "Let Methodism be Methodism!"—this sounds well, but what does it mean? If it means anything to the purpose, it means,—“Let Methodism be English Methodism!” a saying which at once condemns Methodism in Ireland, the Canadas, and elsewhere, where separate Conferences are to be found; Methodism in the United States, where it possesses an Episcopal organization; and Methodism in France, and some parts of the Mission Field, where a different form of Itinerancy prevails.

Again, the expression, “Let Methodism be Methodism!” as applied to the case in hand, involves another fallacy, namely, this,—that what exists in Scotland under the name of Methodism is such in a true and proper sense. The question arises, What *is* Methodism? To this question we shall give a reply, only to the extent required by our present purpose. We reply thus: *First*, It may be viewed in reference to the Doctrines which it preaches—“Repentance, Faith, and Holiness,” and, distinctively, the Witness of the Spirit and Christian Perfection. *Secondly*, It may be viewed in reference to the Active Service of its members; which is especially exemplified in the “helps,”—(to use the language of St. Paul, 1 Cor. xii. 28, lan-

guage which a Methodist commentator ought to be able to interpret, though other commentators appear to be singularly puzzled with it)—the “helps” with which it furnishes its ministers. The chief of these are two, corresponding to the two functions of the ministerial office. His “helps,” as “Pastor” are the Class-Leaders; and as “Teacher,” the Local-Preachers, or to use the more concise and correct term, Exhorters. *Thirdly*, It may be viewed in its recognition of the great duty and privilege of all believers, “the Communion of Saints,” as seen in the institution of the Class-Meeting. And, *Lastly*, it may be viewed in reference to the Mutual Interchange of its Ministers—the main bond by which its ministers and churches are bound together, and are constituted one organized and powerful whole. The Itinerancy is one of the chief glories of Methodism; if not, indeed, when rightly understood, the chief and most precious of them all. This statement, as we have already intimated, does not profess to be a complete definition or description of Methodism; but, to be true as far as it goes. And the use we wish to make of it is this—as showing, that whatever system does not include these four things, is not Methodism; and also, as showing, that if these are wanting in any considerable degree, in that pro-

portion, the true Methodistic spirit and character are absent.

Let us test Scottish Methodism on these four points. *In the first place*, with regard to its Doctrines, it is evidently not enough that a church should have them in possession;—a church exists for the purpose of proclaiming its doctrines,—of making a proclamation so clear, and complete, that, whether they be embraced or not, they shall, at least, be known and understood in some tolerable degree. The church of which we are now speaking has been in existence upwards of a hundred years; a most important circumstance, which cannot, with propriety, be left out of our calculation, when we are seeking to estimate from results the character of its agency. What, then, is the condition of this country, as a whole, at the present day, in reference to a knowledge of our doctrines, and also of our discipline and institutions? It is a condition of profound ignorance—ignorance which prevails alike, with few exceptions, among educated and uneducated. And a glance at the map of Scotland, that impartial witness, will satisfy any one that what is here stated, must, in the nature of things, be the case. Let the reader fix his eye on the two points indicated by the names Edinburgh and Glasgow. Between them stands Airdrie, the only inland

circuit we have. To the east of Edinburgh, he sees the circuit or station of Dunbar. Proceeding from Edinburgh northward, along the coast, he reaches in succession, the circuits of Stirling and Doune, Perth, Dundee, Arbroath, and Montrose, Aberdeen, Banff, and Inverness. Returning to Glasgow, and descending the left bank of the river, he reaches Greenock, and pursuing the line of coast, Ayr and Dumfries. Thus, we find that we have a few circuits fringing the north-east line of coast, and three circuits, with Glasgow, on the south-west coast ; but, that, with the single exception of the circuit between Edinburgh and Glasgow, the whole interior of " broad Scotland, from John O'Groat's to the English border," along with the entire north-west coast, and the Orkneys and Hebrides, is, methodistically speaking, one vast blank, unbroken by the presence of a Methodist church, or the visit of a Methodist minister.

In the second place, the Class-Leaders and Local-Preachers, those efficient helps of the ministry, without which Methodism, as such, is all but powerless, scarcely exist, save in a few circuits ; and, perhaps, in no circuit are they to be found in full strength and efficiency. There are circuits in which the leadership of several classes devolves on the minister ; and, in most of our circuits, or rather, stations, there is one chapel

or church, and one minister who officiates, Sabbath by Sabbath, exactly in the manner, in this respect, of the Presbyterian ministers.

Thirdly. Is the Class-Meeting rightly carried out—the Class-Meeting, which is the life-blood of the Methodistic system? It has not been maintained. A most important change in reference to it dates as far back as the days of *Wesley*. We have a class of communicants distinct from the members who meet in Class. The Sacramental token gives them a claim to the administration of “sealing ordinances,” that is, of the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord’s Supper. We are at this stage dealing with facts simply as facts, and as showing the present condition of things. And we adduce this fact as showing, beyond all doubt, in its connection with others, that the question which lies before us for discussion, is not whether we ought to pass from an English form of Methodism to a Scottish form, but whether we ought to pass from the present nondescript form, which is neither English nor Scottish, to a form intelligently adapted to the needs of the Scottish nation.

Fourthly. What the Class-Meeting is to a community of believers, a real, and not merely theoretical bond of union, constituting them a living church, or, at least, causing spiritual life to circulate more vigorously among them than

would otherwise be possible ; *that* the Itinerancy is to a community of churches, constituting them one collective church, “ mighty through GOD to the pulling down of strongholds.” Well then ; has the Itinerancy been upheld ? We must here be allowed, in order to avoid repetition, to assume the results which will be found duly wrought out under Topic I., and to state that these results amount to a negative reply, and that they show that the institution of Itinerancy is in a condition which is utterly unsatisfactory.

After this partial, preparatory review of things as they are, we pause before we proceed to a consideration of things as they ought to be, to say that we are quite prepared to repeat with our objector, real or imaginary, his favourite formula, and say with him, “ Let Methodism *be* Methodism ; don’t mend our system, but work it.” And yet we might perhaps think that, though Methodism does not need mending, his ideas of Methodism may need a little mending ; and should prefer to express our meaning thus,—Let what is called Methodism become really such ; and then it will certainly need no mending, it will only need working, and what is better still, it will be *capable of being worked*.

A century has rolled away, bequeathing to us its legacy of solemn experience, and shall that experience make us no wiser ? Or, shall we act

on the maxim, You must just do the best you can? Who, acting on such a maxim, taken not in its true and only legitimate sense, but as furnishing an opiate to sloth and lukewarmness, can entertain the hope of rendering his account at *The Great Audit* "with joy and not with grief!"

Therefore, Let Methodism BE Methodism! we repeat. Let it be what it was termed by the late great and good Dr. Chalmers, when he exclaimed, "Methodism is Christianity in earnest!" What then are the characteristics of a Christianity which is in earnest? An earnest Christianity knows how to exhibit firmness and energy in reference to the great essentials of religion, and knows not less how to exhibit elasticity and pliancy in reference to what is non-essential. Who more firm even to martyrdom than the great apostle of the Gentiles, yet this is his language: "Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews; to them that are under the law, as under the law, that I might gain them that are under the law; to them that are without law, as without law, (being not without law to God, but under the law to Christ,) that I might gain them that are without law. To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; *I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.*" Even so,

Methodism has become to the English, as an Englishman; to the Americans, as an American; to the French, as a Frenchman; *and why should it not become to the Scotch as a Scotchman.*

In the minutes for 1786, we read as follows :—
 “ After Dr. Coke’s return from America, many of my friends begged I would consider the case of Scotland, where we had been labouring for many years, and had seen so little fruit of our labour. Multitudes, indeed, set out well, but they were soon turned out of the way : chiefly by their ministers either disputing against the truth, or refusing to admit them to the Lord’s Supper ; yea, or to baptize their children, unless they would promise to have no fellowship with the Methodists. Many who did so, soon lost all they had gained, and became twofold more the children of hell than before. To prevent this, I at length consented to take the same step with regard to Scotland, which I had done with regard to America. But this is not a separation from the church at all. Not from the Church of Scotland, for we were never connected therewith any further than we are now ; not from the Church of England, for this is not concerned in the steps which are taken in Scotland.”

The “ step ” which *Mr. Wesley* here states that he took was that of ordaining ministers, and thus empowering them to administer the Sacra-

ments. He thus recognised the necessity of a distinctive treatment in regard to Scotland ; and acted upon the principle that Scotland and America in this respect resembled each other. We here see the principle of adaptation, in its germ and commencement ; and on the supposition that the “ set time ” had then fully “ come ” for its complete development, it would, doubtless ere this, have caused Methodism in this country to take its stand by the side of English and American Methodism, rivalling them in power and usefulness. The Scottish type of Methodism would in that case have differed from the English type, as the English type differs from the American, but it would have been found to possess its own peculiar excellences. The words above cited were written by *Mr. Wesley* but a few years before his death : after which all traces of distinctive treatment speedily passed away, and this country became virtually, what it has since continued, an English District.

Mr. Wesley's policy recognised the necessity of a distinctive treatment in another respect also. He sent “ chosen men ” to Scotland. This part of his policy, it is well known, has *not* been carried out. There is no country on the face of the earth where the ministerial character is more highly revered,—is *so* highly revered,—as in this ; and naturally flowing from that lofty

reverence that exists in the mind of the nation a most sensitive jealousy. But on this point, "*sap. verb. sat.*"—A third proof of distinctive treatment, and one which has been already mentioned will be found fully set forth under the head of Class-Meetings.

The remark is very obvious, but not on that account the less important, that whatever principles may be submitted to the reader's consideration in the course of the ensuing statements, they have reference wholly and solely to the case of Scotland. The present is a case sufficiently peculiar, and sufficiently important, to demand to be decided on its own merits ; and it is exceedingly to be desired that, confessedly difficult as it is, it should not be rendered more so, by being complicated with any other.

The adaptation which is needed, in order to organize our system and render it efficient, may be discussed under the seven following topics, arranged in the order in which they are best calculated to throw light on each other :—

I.—THE MINISTRY.

II.—FINANCE.

III.—THE CLASS-MEETING.

IV.—THE SACRAMENTS.

V.—PSALMODY.

VI.—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

VII.—SUBSIDIARY MEANS.

I. We approach, now, the consideration of that which is placed first in order, as being first in importance—THE MINISTRY.

We shall take as our text, on this subject, a letter written by *Mr. Wesley* to *Mr. Benson*, then travelling in this country; the italics being now added. (Works XII. 392, 12mo. ed.)

“LONDON, Oct. 23rd, 1773.

“DEAR JOSEPH,

“I wish every one of our Preachers who goes to Scotland, were of the same mind with you. We are not called to sit still in one place; it is neither for the health of our souls nor bodies. Billy Thomson never satisfied me on this head, not in the least degree. I say still, we will have Travelling Preachers in Scotland, or none. *The thing is fixed; the manner of effecting it is to be considered.* Now, set your wit to this: find out the τὸ πῶς.” [the manner.] “How shall this matter be accomplished? You did not do well in selling your horse, and thereby laying another bar in the way. Though I am (by the exquisite negligence of my late book-keeper) a thousand pounds worse than nothing, I would have spared a few pounds to have eased that burden. However, you must do as you can. Our Preachers shall either travel there, as in England, or else stay in England.”

“I am, dear Joseph,

“Yours affectionately,

“JOHN WESLEY.”

From this paternal letter it appears that *Mr. Wesley* found, even in his day, that the English form of Itinerancy did not suit Scotland, and that, in point of fact, it was not carried out; that nevertheless, he was resolved, that Itinerancy should be carried out; that he saw that some new plan must be devised; and, that he accordingly requested *Mr. Benson* to "set his wit" to work to devise that plan. At the distance of eighty-two years from the date of that letter, we find that no plan was devised; and that things are as they now are. *Wesley* and *Benson* have passed away to their eternal reward. It is very plain they did their work—the work assigned them by Divine Providence: and it is equally plain they did not do ours. They attempted the solution of a problem, which, nevertheless, they left unsolved. If *they* left it unsolved, how can *we* hope to solve it? it may be asked. We reply—Every one who has given in his adhesion to the "Twelve Rules of a Helper," knows that the concluding sentence of those Rules—a sentence which condenses the essence of the whole—is this; "Therefore you will need all the grace, *and all the sense* you have, and to have all your wits about you;" and has thus bound himself, on every question affecting the vital interests of Methodism, to apply his faculties and energies to its solution,

until a definite and satisfactory result be obtained.

To every one, therefore, who has given in his adhesion to those "Rules," the question arises whether a *primâ facie* glance at the subject before us, does not suggest such considerations as the following:—Whether the true and only reason why those venerable men failed in their endeavour to solve this problem, must not have been that, in their day, the due conditions of its solution were wanting?—Whether the advancing development of Scotland's resources and importance do not cause the question to press upon us with an urgency with which it did not press upon them; inasmuch as Scotland now contains a population of three millions, of which it may be said, that it is as important in reference to the world's evangelization, as any thirty millions outside the British Isles to which our efforts can be directed?—Whether the advancing internal development of Methodism has not shed a light upon Methodism itself, which, in their day was shed but partially and dimly?—Whether the development of Scotland, and the development of Methodism do not unite to pour upon the entire question a powerful radiance, making our path of duty plain and clear?—and, Whether, in fact, those honoured men, into whose labours,

and into the spirit of whose labours, we profess to have entered, were they living now, would not see the solution of this question written as with a sunbeam, a beam from the Sun in the spiritual heavens, the Sun of Righteousness; seeing that, as stated by him who last occupied the chair of *Wesley*, their single aim "was to spread scriptural holiness;" and that, in the prosecution of that aim, "they never tied up their hands," "but held themselves free as to any mode of accomplishing their work," knowing that "Charity is above Rubrics," that is, above High Church Rubrics; for of Methodist Rubrics, as hampering them in a question of this sort, they knew nothing whatever.

Any solution, to be valid, must unite the suffrages of Scripture, of Methodism, and of common sense;—three arguments which are not so truly three as one—three aspects of one argument. We place the argument drawn from Methodism between the arguments drawn from Scripture and from common sense, since we consider that the spirit of Methodism, in the past and in the present, is in perfect harmony with the deductions of Scripture, and the dictates of a sound judgment. The union of the two last-mentioned, alone constituted the Methodism of our fathers; in other words, they simply asked, in reference to any given question,

What does Scripture, honestly interpreted, say? And, What does Common Sense suggest with regard to the application of Scripture to passing times and circumstances?—To Methodism, distinctively so termed, we cannot find that they made any reference whatever. And had a dwarfish conventionalism, usurping the name of Methodism, made its appearance among them, they would have scorned and disdained it. Moreover, it will be seen that Methodism, in the person of its founder and representative, gives a most distinct and decided utterance on the subject before us.

First : SCRIPTURE.

It is written (Eph. iv. 11), “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” And again (Eph. ii. 20), “And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets.” The foundation of a building, when built upon, is no longer visible; “apostles and prophets,” therefore, disappear from view; and there remain “evangelists,” and “pastors and teachers.” The work of building up the church of Christ demands two classes of labourers; those who are engaged in “planting” new churches, and those who are engaged in conserving and “watering” those already planted. The Great Head of the Church

has provided "evangelists" for the former work, and "pastors and teachers" for the latter. The pastoral and teaching branches of the ministerial office merge into each other; since the due exercise of discipline teaches most important lessons, and by "teaching" the pastor wields an influence without which true government cannot exist.

We cannot doubt that these two classes of labourers were intended to continue in the Church, till that Church be rendered by their labours complete and perfect. Accordingly, we find that of the two Epistles addressed to Timothy, the former has reference to the "bishops" who were to be ordained as pastors over the churches; while the latter has reference to the office of evangelist; since in it the "bishop" or "pastor" is not once mentioned, while the evangelist is spoken of as to his "work," and, by implication, with regard to his office also.* If it be argued that the evangelists were endued with extraordinary gifts, it may be replied, so were the primitive elders; and, indeed, many who were neither evangelists nor elders. And, what, we may inquire, in passing, are our modern missionaries, home or foreign, but evangelists? And we may inquire further, why not give them their true name, and true dignity?

* See in confirmation of this remark, *Douglas on the Office of the Evangelist*.

We hold, further, though this constitutes no necessary part of our argument, that the "apostles" were inspired "evangelists," and the "prophets" inspired "pastors." For the Churches which the apostles planted must have had pastors; the apostles themselves could not be the pastors of those churches, since their duty was to "go into all the world;" uninspired men could not be pastors; and the prophets must have held some office. Here is an office needing men to fill it; and here are men exactly adapted to fill that office; and as we find that the pastors are designated "pastors and teachers," so we find that the prophets of Antioch are designated "prophets and teachers." Thus the building exactly answers to the foundation on which it is built; "apostles," and "prophets and teachers," answering to "evangelists" and "pastors and teachers." When the foundation of the Church was fully laid, and the canon of Scripture had become complete, the inspired utterances of apostles in their itinerant labours, and of prophets in their pastoral labours, were no longer needed; and, the building up of the Church was thenceforward committed to uninspired men.

Nevertheless, our limits prevent us from unfolding all the reasons which sustain this argumentation; and we, therefore, prefer to rest the

whole stress of the present question on this plain, simple, and irrefragable argument, the evangelists constitute no part of the foundation; therefore they constitute part of the building. In other words, the office of evangelist was intended to be permanent in the church of Christ, and, in point of fact, is permanent, under another name.

It is worthy of remark, that it is understood that a band of Evangelists is being organized in Glasgow, by one of the Presbyterian bodies; that the men selected are among the choice men of the ministry; that those who make the selection do not scruple to go beyond the limits of their own denomination; that the duty of those ministers is to preach to the heathen masses, and raise up new churches; that in point of maintenance, they are placed on a par with ministers of their own standing; and that they are styled—Evangelists.

Secondly : METHODISM.

Mr. Wesley was not a man of “idle words;” his words all had a work to do, and they did it. And yet we find that in the letter previously quoted, he says, “The thing is fixed, the manner of effecting it is to be considered;” and again, “Set your wit to this;” and yet again, “Find out the *το πως* ;” and still again, “How

shall this matter be accomplished ?” And when, at the close of the letter, he says, “Our preachers shall either travel there as in England, or stay in England,” by the expression, “as in England,” he must, of course, be understood to mean, in some mode analogous to that in use in England, not identical with it; else there would have been no necessity for him to set forth in such variety of phrase the need of *discovering* the *το πως*—a Greek term to express, we presume, a *difficult* matter. The duty of adapting Methodism to Scotland, when the fitting moment should have arrived, is, we conceive, as truly a legacy bequeathed to us, however unconsciously to himself, by our Founder, as is the duty of maintaining Methodism in England. For, as we have been officially reminded, “Methodism is a child of Providence,” not a thing of human device, nor of dead system, but a living child, and we may add, (whether this be necessarily implied in the word or not,) with power of growth, development, and adaptation; and that Providence, who watches over His own child, has caused this letter to descend to us, a letter which must be taken in connection with the distinctive treatment which *Mr. Wesley* actually bestowed on Scotland.

Let us now quote, with all the deference due to the words of that prince and patriarch of

modern evangelists, the language of *Mr. Wesley* with regard to Itinerancy. "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 that it was ever the will of our LORD that any congregation should have one Teacher only.* 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." (Works. XIII. p. 189.) We have now discovered the essence of Itinerancy; the principle which it embodies; the reason on which it rests; it is this—No church ought to be confined to a single teacher; every church ought to have a sufficient number of teachers. Besides the advantages which *Mr. Wesley* mentions as accruing to a congregation, from a change of teachers, there are advantages accruing to the minister, and to congregations and ministers considered collectively. No minister can endure the wear and tear of intellect and nervous energy caused by preaching Sabbath after Sabbath, and year after year, to the same congregation, without grievously sinking below his true level, and becoming unfitted for many minor branches of ministerial

labour to which he would otherwise be able to attend with ease and efficiency. If the congregation needs variety, he needs variety likewise. Also, we have already seen, that Itinerancy supplies a bond which unites churches with each other, and ministers with each other; that it counteracts that tendency to exclusiveness and isolation, which is the great antagonist of "brotherly-kindness;" and, that it is, on a grander scale, an exemplification of the principle of the Communion of Saints—exemplified, on a lower scale in the institution of the Class-Meeting. The church of CHRIST at large is, therefore, signally indebted to Methodism for the exemplification, which it thus exhibits, of the principle of the inter-communion of churches.

We have heard what Scripture says; we have heard what *Mr. Wesley* says; now let us hear what the Scotch say. It is to this effect:—The temperament of the Scotch people is altogether opposed to the frequent changes which the present form of Itinerancy renders imperative. In comparing this country with England, it may be said, with due limitation, that in England, the people are attached to the place of worship, or rather to the ministry of the Word as such, while, in Scotland, their sympathies cluster round the minister who officiates from Sabbath to Sabbath, and whose household mini-

strations they enjoy during the week ; and the removal of a minister who has gained their esteem is often tantamount, if not to the actual breaking up of a congregation, yet to the effectual loosening of the hold which Methodism had, through him, gained upon them. This cause operates not only in reducing our numbers, but in preventing others from joining us. But, if the attachment of the people to their minister, when once formed, is so exceedingly strong, that attachment is formed with proportionate slowness. It has been said, " In Scotland, the first year, the people look at you ; the second, they speak with you ; and the third, they love you ;" rather a slow process this, we may be apt to think ; but, making due allowance for the aphoristic form which the saying assumes, it contains substantial truth. Hence, our present form of Itinerancy operates against us most powerfully in another way,—in depriving the minister of his due influence during the greater part of his three years' term, should he even complete that term.

We have now the whole case before us, in its main features ; and the question arises, Is there any plan by which, in the *first* place, the benefits of Itinerancy in evangelizing the masses may be secured in full ; by which, *secondly*, the benefits arising from the inter-communion of

ministers and churches may also be secured in full; and by which, *thirdly*, the desire of the Scottish people, to have pastors, may be met in full? We think that the teaching of Scripture, and the actual working of Methodism, point us to such a plan, and that its plainness and simplicity, and the comparative ease with which it may be entered upon, are not among its least recommendations.

Let us go back to the letter of *Mr. Wesley*, and we shall find it still more fruitful than we have yet found it. It has shown us that our purpose ought to be firm and "fixed" to uphold the principle of Itinerancy. It has also shown us that some new mode is needed for Scotland; it will yet further show us in what direction to look in order to discover that mode. "I say still, we will have Travelling Preachers in Scotland, or none." This sentence has, what it does not appear on the surface to have—a twofold reference. It has a reference, first, to Itinerancy, usually so called; and in the second place, to that interchange which *Mr. Wesley* always required should be kept up among the Preachers travelling here. Viewed in its first reference, we may say that the response of Scotland has been the acceptance of the latter alternative, and, accordingly, of Travelling Preachers we have "none," or next to none. But its second

reference is evidently that to which we must most especially have regard, since *Mr. Wesley* makes use of such expressions as these,—“How shall this matter be accomplished?” “You did not do well in selling your horse, and thus throwing another obstacle in the way.” The horse must have been needed for making an interchange with other ministers, and for visiting neighbouring places through the week.

Methodism then has an Itinerancy, and an Itinerancy within an Itinerancy,—an outer and an inner Itinerancy. That the latter is of the essence of Itinerancy in such a sense that no true Itinerancy can exist without it, is plain from the letter before us, and is also manifest from the following considerations : first, the care taken by Conference to avoid creating single stations, thus acting on the principle of the Saviour, who sent out the Seventy, “two and two ;” secondly, the arrangement which requires that ministers in single stations should exchange periodically with neighbouring ministers, an exchange usually effected with ease in England, from the vicinity of those ministers,—to which must be added, the exchanges spontaneously made on special occasions ; and, thirdly, the arrangement which requires that the Chairman of the District should himself visit those single stations once in the course of the year.

Now, let us view the actual working of Itinerancy in Scotland. The outer Itinerancy which originated in evangelistic effort, may be taken to represent that principle. Well, then, have we any evangelistic effort in Scotland—any effort to act upon the masses who are sinking into virtual heathenism? We have none, none whatever. The inner Itinerancy which is the interchange between ministers—have we that? In the great majority of the few churches we possess, we have it not. In another letter written by *Mr. Wesley* to *Mr. Benson*, we find the following statement; “You will be buried in Scotland, if you sit still.” We *do* sit still, and *are* buried; and conversely—being buried, we therefore, of necessity, sit still. In other words, the sitting-still system, has caused the extinction of so many churches that those which remain are so “few and far between” that it is with the utmost difficulty that an interchange is effected.* Again, he

* “Clothe the case in circumstances,” Lord Eldon was accustomed to say. Here then is the case so clothed. Peterhead, one place of the writer’s residence, may be taken as an instance. This place is nominally the second place in the Aberdeen Circuit, though financially and virtually a separate circuit. An exchange with Aberdeen, which is 33 miles to the south, costs, as the total expense, 26 shillings; with Banff, the same distance to the north, the same sum. Formerly, Newburgh was a station, midway between Aberdeen and this place. The future will furnish facilities for the working of Methodism which do not exist at present; as a line of railway will shortly

states that if " he himself should preach one whole year in the same place, he would preach both himself and the greater part of his congregation asleep ;" so that, if *Mr. Wesley's* judg-

be constructed along the line of coast northward from Aberdeen.—As Peterhead has thus been introduced to the reader's notice, it may answer a useful purpose to furnish a brief view of its vicissitudes. It is a place that has produced three ministers. It was first visited from Newburgh ; and preaching was held for sometime in a school-room, and a class formed. In 1815, the English Episcopal Chapel was purchased, and in a few years, though capable of accommodating upwards of 600 persons, was found to be too small. The alterations made brought the debt to £500. The chapel at Newburgh being in difficulties was sold, and the Peterhead Circuit which included Newburgh, and had two ministers, was reduced from two ministers to one. This arrangement ruined Peterhead, for one minister now divided his labours between the places ; and the chapel was consequently closed each alternate Sabbath ; preaching being held in a school-room at Newburgh on that Sabbath. The minister was then withdrawn from this place, and the chapel ordered to be sold. Now, let the result be weighed ; we left them, but—*they would not leave us*. They purchased the chapel back, applied for a probationer, and their request being refused, hired a local preacher to come and reside among them. That the minister should have been withdrawn is not to be wondered at, when we consider that the Contingent Fund was supporting the place at a heavy expense. In the circumstances in which they were now placed, " as sheep without a shepherd," it can be no matter of surprise that dissension, and ultimately division, arose among them. The chapel was again sold, and used by the Establishment as a Chapel of Ease. A new Chapel of Ease being built, the upper half of the chapel was purchased by us, and fitted up for worship, the lower half

ment is to be relied upon, we are each of us, in spite of himself, preaching himself and his congregation asleep. Thus, in whatever light we look upon Itinerancy in the form in which it now exists, we find that it is in a state of utter decay ; its strength and substance are eaten out of it ; it is rotten to the core.

Itinerancy then, which is the blending of the evangelistic and pastoral offices in the same minister, has utterly failed to answer the purposes for which it was instituted in Scotland. What then is the remedy ? We reply, the question answers itself. If the attempt to blend these offices has not succeeded, the only plan which remains, is to EFFECT A SEPARATION BETWEEN THEM, *devolving the former upon Evangelists, and the latter upon Pastors.*

First—Evangelists.—Two sorts of work demand two sorts of workmen. That the work of an Evangelist is, to some extent, dissimilar to that of a Pastor none can doubt; and the

being used for the purposes of merchandise ; and a young minister was obtained. This is the condition of matters at present. The place of worship is now free from debt, and could sufficient assistance be obtained, the lower part might then be delivered from the “buyers and sellers.” The preceding recital shows that there is a use and even beauty in what some term “Scottish prejudice,” when that prejudice is on the right side ; and shows what may be expected from Scottish *firmness of character* when Methodism shall once take root in this land.

likelihood therefore is, that the Great Head of His Church raises up men qualified to perform both these sorts of work. If so, it is to that extent a mistake to make an Evangelist a Pastor, or a Pastor an Evangelist. In order to view a principle aright, it is necessary to view it in its most perfect exemplifications. The late Dr. Newton was, beyond doubt, admirably fitted for the work of an evangelist ; so fitted for it that fitness for that work involved, to a considerable extent, unfitness for the position of a pastor. His mental and physical qualifications alike required that he should be incessantly moving. His biographer states that, at the Disruption, he was invited to make a six months' tour through the cities and towns of this land. Assuredly, had he done this, the effect would have been to spread the leaven of an earnest Christianity, and thus to answer the great Catholic purpose for which Methodism has been raised up ; it would also have very greatly furthered the Christian object contemplated in the formation of the Evangelical Alliance.—Evangelistic ability when it exists, can never be developed,—and unless developed, can never be known to exist,—except under the requisite conditions, that is, except in suitable spheres of labour. Nevertheless, the pastorate might well engage profitably to some extent in evangelistic labours. This is

shown in the practice of the Free Church. "The Home and Foreign Record" of that church for December, 1855, gives an account of the efforts of thirty-five of its ministers, appointed as a Deputation by the Home Mission Committee, to labour during a certain period, of the summer "among the more neglected sections of our population." "By their means," says the Record, "the glad tidings of salvation have been proclaimed to upwards of 50,000 of our fellow-countrymen, the majority of whom, but for the method thus employed, would not have heard the gospel message. About 3000 families have been visited in their own dwellings." "Upwards of 20,000 well chosen tracts have been distributed." "The Committee arranged that its deputies should go into the most populous districts in pairs, not only that they might strengthen each others' hands in a work requiring, at least at first, no small amount of self-denial, but that by taking alternate days of preaching and visiting, an unbroken series of sermons might be sustained during the week-evenings, whilst along with this, and as serving to add greatly to its efficiency, an active visitation of the families in the district might be carried on." The writer has personally conversed with one of the ministers sent on a former deputation, who testified, in the most hearty terms, to the in-

vigorating effect produced upon himself and his own pastoral labours.

Secondly—Pastors.—It is possible to conceive of a minister settled as the Pastor of a church, and yet maintaining a continual Interchange with neighbouring ministers, in such a manner that while he preaches in one Sabbath out of two in his own pulpit, on the other Sabbath, his pulpit is occupied by one of several of the neighbouring ministers, with whom he exchanges in rotation. This exchange, along with the additional variety afforded by ministers brought from a distance, for occasional services, and the translation of ministers to new spheres of labour, would, assuredly, give variety enough; while, along with that variety, would be secured the essential element of stability. And it must be borne in mind, that too much variety is quite as bad as too little; as St. Paul teaches, when he speaks of the tendency that would manifest itself in certain persons, to “heap to themselves teachers.” Further, the Pastor has a fixed centre for his operations. From that centre he gradually, but powerfully, works out from year to year, aided by those inestimable auxiliaries,—the Exhorter and Class-Leader. His Exhorters are trained by himself; and he can send the right men to the right places. Thus prejudice in reference to lay-agency is disarmed

by its judicious use. The influence upon the Class-Meeting will be equally favourable; for, if the Class-Meeting is ever to be established aright, it must be through pastoral influence. And no one who has watched the course of events in late years, and read such papers as have appeared in the "Scottish Guardian," on the religious condition of the country, can doubt that, for such a church with its spirituality, and such a system with its efficiency, Scotland is yearning at the present time, although, it may be, that it knows it not.

It must be borne in mind, however, that not all who compose our congregations in Scotland are Scotch in origin and predilections, and that some who are such in origin, have become so habituated to our present forms, that, in this respect, they are denationalized. The late Rev. Thomas Bridgman* is said to have contemplated proposing that certain churches should constitute or become attached to an English District, while the remainder should be formed into a Scottish District. He intended making this proposition at the Conference following the conversation in which he stated that intention to a friend. In the interim, however, the Master's call summoned him to the church above.

* See "Methodism in Scotland:" by Mr. David Wilson—in confirmation of this fact.

The fact, that some of the very small number of Methodists we now have, do not desire an alteration in this respect, though they vehemently desire an alteration in other respects, and do not see that no effective alteration can be made in other respects, unless it be made in this likewise, that fact ought most certainly not to weigh very much with us, when we are considering the question on comprehensive grounds,—considering not merely what do a certain number of our present Methodists prefer, but also what do the great majority wish for, and most especially what does the country require, if Methodism is ever to flourish here.

To pass at once from our present plan to that here sketched, would be both undesirable and impracticable. A transition state, to extend over a number of years, would be needed. And, in this respect, French Methodism presents us with precisely the model of which we are in quest. There, the first appointment of a minister is for the term of three years, and the second appointment, for two additional years; making the possible term of a minister's stay in any given circuit five years.

Thirdly : COMMON SENSE.

We select this term in preference to any other, such as reason or sound judgment, on account

of its *Wesleyan* value and significance, as evinced in that expression of *Mr. Wesley*,—"That uncommon thing, Common Sense!" This expression denotes the high estimate he placed upon it; and intimates that he considered sense as applied to the "common" affairs of human life, and of the Church of GOD, an "uncommon thing." It cannot be out of place to spend a moment in considering its true nature. In its application to the concerns of religion, it is none other than that "spirit of a sound mind," of which St. Paul speaks, when he says, that God has "given us," ministers of the Gospel, "not the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind." And when he thus declares, that it is essentially one with the "spirit of power," producing courage, "and of love," producing zeal, and emphatically opposes it to the "spirit of fear," we are reminded of the chivalrous fearlessness with which our fathers spurned alike the base bondage into which wild mobs, with their hootings and peltings, sought to bring them, and the equally base bondage in which hereditary prejudices, connected with church order, would have enchained them. From such "fear" they were *free*—FREE as the commission they carried in their hearts, and loved to proclaim with their lips. And this freedom, which they have handed down, must be preserved

intact; for not otherwise can the “sacred deposit,” they have handed down, be preserved intact. What is that sacred deposit?—*To spread Scriptural holiness through this land, and through all lands.* In comparison of this, all forms and modes, and all earthly things whatsoever, are light as the small dust of the summer threshing-floor, which the wind of death shall carry away. They are the chaff, necessary to the wheat; but this is the wheat. And, “what is the chaff to the wheat? saith the Lord.” The whole career of *Wesley*, from first to last, testifies, that Common Sense, or the spirit of a sound mind, cannot exist apart from the spirit of Christian courage and zeal.

It is, therefore, to a true, Christian Common sense that we wish to propose these three questions:—*First*: Can that be a proper system which unites the evils of Itinerancy and of a settled ministry, and possesses the advantages of neither the one nor the other? *Secondly*: Supposing the present system prevailed in England;—each minister being appointed to a church, one, two, or three years in succession, and preaching twice on the Sabbath, and once on the week-night, to the same congregation, the whole year round;—would not such a system be felt to be a mere hollow husk, the shell without the kernel, and would it not fail to be tole-

rated, by either ministers or people, beyond a single year? *Thirdly*: Is it possible that the English nation—that nation of which “The Times” said a short time ago, that it is “fond of considering itself the most *practical* nation upon earth,”—should say to the Scottish nation, concerning a system which the experience of a century has demonstrated to be *unpractical* and *impracticable*, You shall either have Methodism in its present form, or, so far as we are concerned, you shall not have it at all;—is this possible?—To these questions let Common Sense reply.

We have spoken of the comparative ease with which this new arrangement may be entered into. Still, we would not seek to conceal the fact, that difficulties must of necessity encompass any scheme which adequately deals with the case. It is one of the finest inductions of the ancient Greeks, “Good things are difficult.” It would, therefore, be a valid presumption against any scheme, could it be said of it, that it is not difficult. All that we can hope to do, is to reduce those difficulties to their *minimum*.

II.—FINANCE.

Let us first view our financial system in its existing condition. And it must, at a single

glance, strike us as strangely anomalous that, during the past year, Methodism in Scotland has sent in aid of the Foreign Missions no less a sum than £561 7s. 1d. ; while of £480 granted to it, £62 3s. was raised within itself; leaving £418 17s. as the net sum allotted to it from the Contingent Fund. Here we have the spectacle of a church sending money abroad, while yet it is so seriously crippled at home, that what, as we shall hereafter show, would amount to the virtual abandonment of Methodism in this country, has by some been recommended—the concentration of our strength upon the chief places. This recommendation implies that our strength is in the cities, and our weakness in the country, whereas our strength or weakness is everywhere alike; there being no greater disproportion than is always to be found between town and country. Of the nominal sum of £480, granted by the Contingent Fund, £190 is already absorbed by the three chief places. The fact that Scotland raises for the Foreign Missions £142 10s. 1d. more than it receives from England, surely points to the conclusion, that if its resources were rightly developed, it would be found perfectly able to support itself, and thus no longer present the singular spectacle of a church both giving alms and receiving alms, and giving more than it receives.

And that it should be in this dependent condition is a state of things, which, whenever he reflects upon it, fires with honest indignation, the heart of every Scottish Methodist. He cannot brook the idea of being in a condition of ecclesiastical dependence. And the very fact that as things now stand, a Scotchman knows that to become a Methodist, he must in that sense surrender his independence, contributes most powerfully to cause many to stand aloof from us.

Two axioms may be laid down in reference to Finance. The first is,—*The financial system of a church should be, as far as possible, in harmony with national usages.* For it is much better to take the broad, deep channels, in which streams have flowed for ages, than to attempt, without due necessity, to create new channels for ourselves. In the former case, we enlist habit, with its force of second nature, on our side; in the latter case, we set it against us in all its power. The second is,—*That that system, while affording ample opportunities to the rich to give all they ought to give, should not make more frequent demands upon the poor than they are able to meet.* Both these principles, we shall shortly see, are violated by the system now in use.

Scottish churches, in general, have two sources of revenue; the first arising from Seat-Rents,

the second, from Church-Door Collections. The latter source of income, it is well known, does not exist south of the Tweed. Nevertheless, Methodism not only adopts this source of revenue, but imports its own, that arising from "a penny a-week, and a shilling a quarter." Thus we have a system which cannot claim to be Scottish; which cannot even claim the merit of consistency, as being English; and which is not in any true sense, an amalgamation of the two; but which is simply the addition of an English source, or sources, of income to the ordinary Scottish sources.

Before we proceed further, let us review the results of the experience of the Free Church on this subject. At the Disruption, an Act of Assembly directed that seats should be free in all the churches; and that the plan of subscriptions collected weekly, monthly, or otherwise, should be adopted by the church throughout its entire extent. But the Free Church had certainly its experience to gain, or it never could have issued such an Act. The plan, as a general scheme, proved an utter failure. It was speedily found that it would not do to ignore national custom; seats must be let, whether subscriptions were obtained or not. The reader is especially desired to fix his attention on the fact that, the subscriptions spoken of as constituting the Sus-

tentation Fund were not from the first intended to be in addition to, but instead of, Seat-Rents. In other words, though the Free Church made a grave mistake, it never attempted to create more than two distinct sources of revenue for the church as a whole, nor indeed, for the church in any sense ; although, in point of fact, a state of things has arisen in which, in reference to its wealthy churches, three sources do exist. Well, what is the state of things at the present time ? Let us divide the Free Churches into City, Town, and Rural. The wealthy churches of Glasgow and elsewhere give to their ministers, in addition to their dividend from the Sustentation Fund, supplements which raise the salary of each to £450. We have no churches answering to these in point of numbers and wealth ; we cannot therefore take them into our present consideration. We come next to the Town Churches where seats are let, and subscriptions are *not* gathered ; the Seat-Rents, with a portion of the Door Collections, constituting what is poured into the Sustentation Fund. In some of the Rural Districts, seats are not let, and subscriptions *are* gathered ; for there the people have not been accustomed to seat-letting. We find then, that, except in the first-named class of churches, the Free Church has two sources of revenue, and only two. The following is an extract from a

paper, issued by the Kirk Session of a Free Church in one of the towns, and supplied to the writer by its minister : “It has been resolved that the three modes of contributing to the funds of the congregation by Seat-Rents, Church-Door Collections, and Subscriptions shall be carried out in future.” Then follow various directions under each of these heads; and across these, under the head of Subscriptions, the pen is drawn, and beneath is written, “Found to be impracticable.”

To return. Let us commence with “considering the poor.” For no church can afford to do without the poor; GOD hath “chosen the poor rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which HE hath promised to give them that love HIM.” As we have already excluded the Cities from our view, we may, for the present, exclude the Rural Districts also, excluding them in the sense before-mentioned. A Scotchman, then, however poor he may be, if dwelling in a town or city, wishes to have seats for himself and family in the House of GOD. This he deems, and rightly, to be as necessary as to have a house to live in; and this honourable feeling is one which Christian prudence dictates should be fostered by us, and in no degree weakened. Also, himself and family, down to the youngest member of the family, give to the Church-Door Collections every time they come to the House of GOD; and this,

at the week-night, as well as Sabbath services. Then comes the addition, if he be a "member of society," of "a penny a-week, and a shilling a-quarter," for himself, and as many of his family as may be members—an addition, if all our rules be complied with, amounting to nearly Ten Shillings a-year for each. Thus more calls are made upon him than he is able to meet: all other collections being also, in a certain sense, extra collections. And the result—not of this cause singly, but of other causes before-named, and after-named, operating along with it, is—that many, who not only wish to join us, but have become converted through our instrumentality, fail to become united with us; that of those who are connected with us, some shrink and leave us altogether; that others feel unable to meet all the demands made upon them, and though they meet them as far as they are able, still feel their position an unsatisfactory one; and that others, from conscious inability to pay all that is required, and from other causes, contract the bad habit of paying nothing or next to nothing: so that, for the faithful few who feel that the work of God must be carried on, there remains a burden which is felt to be most grievous. Nothing short of the most firm and affectionate attachment, could have kept in connection with us the greater part of those who in the places where

the evil has not been practically obviated—and it is obviated only in the rural churches, of which we have but one or two—have had to contend with discouragements so heavy and manifold. An adjustment of our sources of revenue is certainly required ; that by making *them* fewer, we may make *it* larger. How then shall that adjustment be made ?

We have seen that Seat-Rents must be maintained, and, in fact, they should be set up in the one or two rural churches just mentioned, in which they do not exist. Church-Door Collections must also be maintained, and might, under other circumstances, be made much more productive than at present they are. The “ penny a-week ” is too closely interwoven with the Class-Meeting to be given up ; and the Seat-Rents could, if requisite, be adjusted with reference to it. But is the “ shilling a-quarter ” equally necessary ? Would not its abandonment answer these good purposes ? In the *first* place, it would enable many to devote that shilling to the payment of their Seat-Rents, some of whom now occupy seats regularly, paying nothing for them. This change would enable us to carry out the Seat-Rent system vigorously, whereas, at present, nothing is carried out vigorously, and the change would be felt to be a most advantageous one. And since “ a penny a-week ”

is in fact a weekly offering, the *minimum* of which is a penny, those who are able could change their "penny a-week, and shilling a-quarter," into twopence a-week, or any larger sum. And, *further*, since our present financial system acts with all its strength against our Class-Meetings, this would cease to be the case. In short, what is wanted is a system which, in its financial bearings, will not repel, but invite. Had we but the *numbers* we ought to have, our financial difficulties would quickly disappear.*

Finally, the existence of the Free Church is a noble fact, and a most instructive one. That Church has built, within the twelve years which have elapsed since the Disruption, upwards of seven hundred churches, the greater number of which have manses and schools annexed ; and the whole of those erections will shortly be clear of debt. Also, its youngest minister receives £142

* Since there are four times as many people in the Bolton Circuit as in Scotland to the support of one minister, it follows that if a minister in Scotland receives, a-part from the supplements furnished by the Contingent Fund, half the stipend received by a minister in that Circuit, the burden is twice as great upon a member in Scotland to raise that half, as upon a member in that circuit in England ; and this altogether apart from the expense entailed by supporting so many different establishments. We make the supposition simply as a supposition, and as showing the proportional difference in this respect between North and South Britain, whatever the actual sums raised may be.

a-year, and its city-ministers £450 or upwards. Who, in presence of this noble fact, will henceforth say that Scotland is poor—poor, either in pecuniary means, or in disposition to use those means aright? It is also a most instructive fact, showing us that our success in financial affairs, and otherwise, will be in the proportion in which we are able to enlist in our favour the national sympathies.

III.—THE CLASS-MEETING.

“I believe in the Communion of Saints!” saith our venerable Liturgy. And so saith every true Christian. He believes not only in the communion of men with men, and of friends with friends, but of saints with saints. And he believes too, if he sufficiently reflects, that as a matter of common sense and imperative necessity, that principle must embody itself in some definite form. With us, the principle of the communion of saints takes the form of the Class-Meeting, and of the Love-Feast, which is of the nature of a larger Class-Meeting; an institution which, we are bold to say, has been, under God, the honoured instrumentality of most materially assisting to convey to heaven thousands, and tens of thousands, who are now amidst the glorified before the Throne. As a house, if built at all

—if it is not to remain a mere idea, but become a house to live in, affording substantial shelter— must be built according to some definite plan, this rather than that, or that rather than a third ; so it is with the Class-Meeting. And as the principle of that institution finds abundant confirmation from the word of GOD, so the plan in which that principle is embodied, finds abundant confirmation from the experience of multitudes of the people of GOD.

We may, therefore, lay it down as a principle, which is beyond denial and beyond doubt, that there can be no Methodism without the Class-Meeting ; there may be religion, but there cannot be religion in that form which has obtained the appellation of Methodism, the highest and best form, as we believe, of the most glorious dispensation of grace with which GOD has blessed our fallen world. Apart, therefore, from the contemplation of peculiar circumstances, it may be said, that it follows that they only can be accounted members of a Methodist Church who meet in Class.

Here we are met by the objection, “ But the Scotch won’t meet in Class ; so what can you do ? ” Is this true, or is it not ? We may reply in the words of *Mr. Wesley* on another subject, “ It is not true, but there is truth in it. ” Let us endeavour to estimate the amount of truth which is in it.

We must, in the first place, allow for that dislike to the Class-Meeting which is common to all, before the truth is felt in its saving, sanctifying power. "The carnal mind is enmity against GOD;" enmity therefore against true, spiritual religion; and enmity most especially against that religious ordinance by which its enmity is most strongly tested.—Again: we must make due allowance for the fact, that our financial system in its present defective condition, acts with all its strength against our Class-Meetings. And we must bear in mind, that in a country in which settled order and long-established habit have such immense influence, it is much more difficult to give money in a new way than in an old one.

Again: the objection above-cited may be considered as referring to a repugnance felt as to entering Class, or as to a repugnance still felt when they have entered.—With regard to the former, we reply, it is true that the national temperament, producing proverbial caution, and operating in this, as in all things else, prevents them from entering Class with the readiness they would otherwise manifest; but on the other hand, when they have entered, it produces a stability which is most valuable.—To the latter, we reply, that observation teaches that actual attendance, on the part of those who have become

experimentally acquainted with the advantages of meeting in Class, is quite equal to the attendance in England. In proof that the Scottish people know how to value the Class-Meeting aright when they have thus become acquainted with it, it may be stated as an instance, that one who was formerly an Elder in the Free Church, and now a Leader in our own, when deploring to the writer the evils which afflict our system, said, if it were not for our Class-Meetings he should feel almost constrained to quit our communion.

The national cast of mind is reasoning and reflective rather than impulsive. And Class-Meetings are not so foreign to their ideas and habits as perhaps we may suppose; although those meetings are adapted too exclusively to their reflective cast of mind. The Reformed Presbyterian Church, popularly known as the church of the Covenanters, when deprived, during the days of persecution, of a stated ministry, was held together mainly by the bond which its "Fellowship-Meetings" supplied. At these meetings, which have continued to the present day, and which are partially in use in some other churches, a doctrine or passage of scripture is announced for meditation during the ensuing fortnight, and, at the following meeting, is made the subject of conversation. It is evident that *Mr. Wesley* found such meetings as these in use

when he visited Scotland ; as appears from the advice which he states in his Journal he gave to certain persons who frequented them, that they should not merely “ speak loosely on some head of doctrine, but examine each others’ hearts and lives.” To “ examine each others’ hearts and lives,” contributes to “ growth in grace ;” to meditate and converse on scripture, contributes to “ growth in knowledge ;” and between growth in grace and growth in knowledge, the connection is so vital that the one cannot proceed without the other. The Presbyterian “ Fellowship-Meeting” is too exclusively adapted to the latter ; though it is not to be supposed that Christian experience is altogether forgotten ; since passages of scripture are sometimes chosen which can only be treated in an experimental strain, and which, in point of fact, are so treated. The Methodist Class-Meeting, in the hands of such men as the late “ Father Reeves,” admirably combines both objects ; and it is only the Class-Meeting which combines the two objects which is fitted for the people of North Britain. And for the spread of right views on this point, the memoir of the “ Methodist Class-Leader ” should be sown broad-cast throughout our societies here.—The reasoning, reflective tendency, which, as a national characteristic, is so strongly developed, was noticed by *Mr. Wesley*, as ap-

pears from the following note in the Minutes of 1766, "Only show them the *reasonableness* of it in Scotland, [that is, of conforming to certain rules,] and they will conform to anything."

There remains yet a difficulty, and, sooth to say, it is *the* difficulty,—the great difficulty with which we have to deal. It is—Calvinism; preached from two thousand pulpits every LORD'S Day; and, in some instances, given forth in its strongest and most undiluted form. Hence it is that it has become engrained in the mental and moral constitution of the great majority of the people. The fatalistic element in Calvinism, in so far as it is not counteracted by the precious evangelical doctrines contained in that system, produces, as its natural effects, distrust of GOD and distrust of man. And this fact will enable us largely to explain what is termed the temperament of the people,—a temperament which, unwarped, is that of kindness and sociality in a high degree. Now, the Class-Meeting is a means of grace pre-eminently social in its character. It requires a mutual love and confidence which know no reserve but such as Christian prudence dictates (Psalm LXXIII. 15.) The doctrines of Methodism and its institutions remarkably correspond to each other. That salvation is in the gospel honestly and earnestly offered to every man, and that it is the privilege of every believer

to enjoy the witness of the Spirit—these are doctrines with which the ordinances of the Class-Meeting and Love-Feast admirably harmonise. And they stand to each other in the relation of Cause and Effect. The doctrines preached and believed must prepare the way for the Class-Meeting, by producing a state of feeling in which the communion of saints is felt to be a privilege. But if admission to the sacraments is to be made dependent upon their previous acceptance of the Class-Meeting, we shall never bring them beneath the influence of our ministrations of the gospel, and that state of feeling must of necessity continue in which the Class-Meeting is looked upon as no privilege, but an intolerable burden. Every cause must have due time allowed for working out its effect; and, to make meeting in Class the condition on which alone the sacraments can be received, would be to commit the grave mistake of putting, or attempting to put, the Effect before the Cause.

We now come to a consideration of the important and instructive fact, that the change, thus shown to be necessary, was actually made by the Founder of Methodism. The evidence that such a change was made, is to be gathered not from the Minutes of Conference, in which no record to that effect is to be found, but from the testimony of witnesses still living, or but lately

deceased ; and, from the fact, that metal tokens, resembling those in use in the Presbyterian Churches, are still in existence. Let us consider, first, to what the change amounts, and then, the significance of the fact that such a change was made ?

First.—*To what does the change amount ?*
 When Scotland was converted from Popery to Protestantism, and “ a nation was born in a day,” its conversion was so thorough, and its detestation of Popery and all appertaining to it, or thought to appertain to it, so complete, that when Popery was driven out of the land, the observance of the festivals of Christmas Day, and Good Friday was driven out along with it. The English have these festivals, and along with them Anniversary and Missionary Services in abundance, but all the interest which festivals create is in Scotland centred in the Sacramental or “ Communion ” Services. These services are held twice in the year, and at variable times, in order that the minister may be assisted by ministers of neighbouring parishes. For some days preceding and succeeding the Sabbath on which the service is held, other services are held in connexion with it. The main portion of the day is occupied with the administration of the LORD’S Supper, the service commencing usually at Eleven and continuing till Four or Five ; the

evening service being held after a suitable interval. Thus it comes to pass that to a Scotchman the religion which debars him from the Sacraments, except on condition that he meet in Class, is felt by him to be tantamount to no religion at all, until he has been led to embrace Methodistic doctrines in their power. And be it very specially remarked, that unless there be a prospect of obtaining admission to the sacramental privileges of a church, he will not avail himself of the ministrations of that church ; for, as a general rule, "he goes not from" church to church.* This is a state of things which does not prevail in England, where also the population has been pretty equally divided between Calvinism and its opposite. But the sacraments are two. Admission to the sacrament of Baptism by parents on behalf of their children is hardly felt in England to be a privilege conceded to a non-member, but is rather looked upon as a right which all may claim who choose to bring their children for baptism ; whereas, in Scotland, as we shall presently see more fully, that sacrament is placed in a level with the sacrament of the LORD'S Supper. Again, the concession

* An illustrative case in point, though certainly an extreme one, is to be found in the fact, that the father of the late *Dr. Chalmers*, would not cross a burn to hear his son preach on a certain occasion in a neighbouring church, but went in preference to his own parish church.

granted by *Mr. Wesley*, in reference to the latter, is simply an extension of the privilege granted in England, of coming to the LORD'S Table at least a few times previously to membership.

Secondly.—Let us consider *the significance of the fact* that such a change was made by the Founder of Methodism. Looked at in its purely human aspect, it shows us that *Mr. Wesley* was not only a true Christian, but also a true Englishman. The true Englishman,—not the *mere* Englishman, whose sympathies cannot range beyond his own division of the island he lives upon, but the true Englishman, upon whose character Christianity is engrafted,—has a head to understand the wants of other nations, a heart to feel for them, and a hand to help them ; and the Founder of Methodism was one of the most perfect specimens of the true Englishman the world has seen. Moreover, it shows that his Methodism consisted simply and solely in this—the determination, by every scriptural means, to “spread scriptural holiness,” that “by all means he might save some.” And, inasmuch as the change was made in his old age, and was a change which affected the very vitals of Methodism, it shows that he was himself to the last; and that, to the end of his days, he preserved that admirable union of firmness and flexibility by which he was so signally distinguished.

We would draw a line of distinction between the Adult and the Youthful population.

With regard to the Adult population, it is desirable to make use of all practicable and prudent means, both from the pulpit and the press, and in private conversation, to “show them the reasonableness” of meeting in Class;—also, to meet those of them who may be received as Communicants, once a quarter, for the receipt of their quarterly notes of Admission;—also, to lay it down as a rule, which is already substantially done, that the same contributions should be expected from them as from those who meet in Class;—and, lastly, to report the number of Communicants, and that as distinguished from the number of members.

With regard to the Youthful population, upon which our hope must chiefly rest, our efforts ought to be strenuously directed towards our Sabbath Schools, Bible Classes, and Day Schools. At present we have not a single Day School in existence.

Mr. Wesley's procedure, in reference to the Class-Meeting, is in beautiful accordance with the profoundly instructive statement made by St. Mark concerning our Saviour, that “He taught the people *as they were able to hear it.*” Moreover, He has appointed that the ministers of His gospel should be “fishers of men.” The

occupation of the fisherman differs from that of the hunter, in this—that the hunter singles out his victim and hunts it down, whereas, the net of the fisherman must be both skilfully cast and gently drawn, if he would enclose “a great multitude of fishes.”

IV.—THE SACRAMENTS.

These are two—Baptism and the Supper of the LORD. In the sacrament of the LORD'S Supper, believers enter into or renew their covenant with GOD on their own behalf; in the Sacrament of Baptism, they enter into covenant with Him on behalf of their offspring. It follows, therefore, that none but believers, that is, those who are presumed to be such from their connection with the Church of CHRIST, are entitled to the administration of the Sacraments; and that none but those who partake of the Sacrament of the LORD'S Supper, on their own behalf, have a claim to the administration of Baptism in behalf of their children. For Baptism, as a Sacrament, involves covenant obligations, on the part of the MOST HIGH and on the part of the parents. He, on His part, graciously engages to be a God unto their seed, even as He is unto themselves; and, they on their part, engage, and publicly and solemnly pledge themselves

“to train up their children in the nurture and admonition of the LORD.” But can *they* train up their children to walk in the way to heaven, who themselves are not walking in that way? and can they be walking in that way who are not in connection with the church of CHRIST?—as it is written, “the LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved,” or rather, such as were brought into a state of salvation; that is, just as they were brought into a state of salvation, they were added by Himself to His Church; whence the inference is manifest and undeniable, that those whom the LORD has not added to His Church, He has not brought into a state of salvation. And none but such as have thus consecrated themselves to GOD, are warranted in consecrating their children to Him; for, otherwise, they take upon themselves vows they are unable to fulfil; and Solomon says, “Better is it that a man should not vow, than that he should vow and not pay his vows;” and St. Paul says to every minister of the gospel, “Be not partaker of other men’s sins.” The whole and sole benefit resulting from Baptism, is the benefit resulting from the vow made in faith and faithfully performed, and the grace of GOD given in accordance with His covenant engagement. If any suppose otherwise, they are of necessity driven to consider Baptism as being,

on the one hand, a mere ceremony, a national usage, entitling the child to certain temporal privileges; or, on the other hand, as possessing an inherent efficacy, in itself considered.

Nor is this mere theory; the most important practical consequences flow from it. For it were better far, if children are to be brought up in a condition of virtual heathenism, that they should be brought up in unbaptised heathenism. A broad line of demarcation would thus be drawn between the church and the world. Family religion, the root of religion in churches and in nations, would thus be upheld. Accordingly, we find that in Scotland where these views prevail, family training has been, to a great extent, conscientiously and assiduously attended to; no less important a portion of the Sabbath than the evening having been, in days past, and being still, in most parts of the country, set apart for this duty.

But while the Scottish churches have taken this lofty stand, it is matter of regret, that we, conforming to an usage derived from the English National Church,* have failed to do so. Cases have occurred in which children have been baptized by us, whose parents have been connected with no church whatever—children for whose

* See in confirmation of these views, an able article in the "Methodist Quarterly Review," (United States,) for Jan., 1855, entitled "On the Relation of Baptised Infants to the Church."

training no church and no pastor became responsible ; and thus Methodism has suffered in public estimation. Hence, also, the most conflicting usages prevail amongst ourselves in different localities ; in some cases, the usage approaches to that of England, and in others, to that of Scotland. And again, in the same localities, it is variable, varying not unfrequently with every change of minister. This is a state of things most mischievous in its effects upon our societies and congregations, and imperatively requiring that some well-defined principle be laid down and acted upon.

The vantage ground on which the Christian church has been placed by its Great Head in reference to the world, in having it in its power to refuse Baptism to all whose parents do not make a profession of "CHRIST and Him crucified," and show, by a consistent demeanour, the sincerity of their profession, is not lightly to be abandoned, but to be firmly maintained inviolate. It will yet supply one of the chief means by which the church will act effectually on the wickedness of the world,—raising the world to the level of the church, instead of the church sinking to the level of the world,—and will thus usher in the bright, blissful days of the Millennium. The old ministers of Scotland understood this well : they knew how when parents present

their children for Baptism, the best and finest susceptibilities of human nature may be wrought upon ; and, in the records handed down of their lives, we see that many who habitually absented themselves from the house of GOD, were brought, by the refusal of Baptism to their children, and by faithful and affectionate remonstrance, to repentance and reformation.

We now proceed to show that what is here set forth, is not only in harmony with the spirit of Methodism, but with the letter of its most express enactments.

In the "Articles of Agreement for General Pacification" of 1795, we read thus :—"The administration of Baptism and of the LORD'S Supper is intended *only for the members of our own Societies.*"

In the Minutes of 1812, we read, "Let us administer the ordinance of Baptism, in general, only to the children of our own members and those of our regular hearers."

It is not quite easy to fix the relation which the latter regulation bears to the former. Was it intended as an extension of privilege ? Perhaps the proper view to be taken of it is, that it was intended as a restriction upon a practice which, it may be, had grown up at variance with the original rule.

It is obvious that the best plan to be pursued

in Scotland is, not to interfere too hastily with the existing state of things, but to restrict the administration of Baptism to the children of seat-holders, except in those localities where a higher rule already prevails ; and, after a given period, to restrict it to the children of communicants and members.

V.—PSALMODY.

The service of song constitutes a most important part of public worship. It is the only part in which the entire congregation vocally joins, and very much of the edification resulting from the entire service depends upon the manner in which this part of it is performed.

In Eph. V. 19, the apostle St. Paul speaks of "Psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs." The Psalms he names first, plainly referring to the inspired compositions known under that name. These the Established Church of England has largely incorporated in her public services, partly as chanted, partly as read responsively, and partly as reduced to verse and sung. *Mr. Wesley* ever considered the Methodist services as supplementary to those at church, stating that were it otherwise, they would be very defective, except of course in those chapels in which the Church Service is used. The Established Church of

Scotland, the Free Church, the United Presbyterian and Reformed Presbyterian Churches, and the Independent Churches, all use the Scottish version of the Psalms; the two first-named churches adding only the paraphrases and five hymns, sanctioned by the authority of the General Assembly, the third and fifth using also collections of hymns recently compiled, and the fourth confining itself to the Psalms; *but all use the Psalms*. This time-hallowed version is deeply seated in the affections of the people at large.

Again we adduce proof that what we are about to state is in full accordance, not merely with the spirit of Methodism, but with its express enactments.

In the Minutes for 1786, it is directed that when the full Church Service is not used, the Lessons and Psalms should at least be used. We have the Lessons, but where are the Psalms? In Scotland, we have entirely ignored them; we use them *in no form whatever*. This, of itself, is sufficient to account for a much larger proportion of the prejudice which we have unnecessarily created, than would readily be imputed to it. Christian propriety, and Christian expediency, in this case, both point to the necessity of our using them; for, if St. Paul gives them the first place in his enumeration, ought they not to have a place, and the chief place, in our arrangements?

Again ; so recently as in the Minutes for the year 1816, we find the following : “ The Conference recommend to our congregations on the LORD’S Day Forenoon, the use of the Psalms and Hymns first collected by *Mr. Wesley*, enlarged by *Dr. Coke*, and now used in some of our chapels in London.” The collection here referred to contains the greater number of the Psalms lately published in “ *Charles Wesley’s Version of the Psalms.*”*

The practice of expounding the Psalms, which prevails in the generality of the Scottish Churches, contributes much to their being intelligently sung, and might, with advantage, be adopted by ourselves.

VI.—GENERAL ADMINISTRATION.

It carries with it the light of an axiomatic principle to say that it is with corporate bodies, as it is with individuals,—in order to become

* Singing is beginning to be cultivated anew with great success by all the churches of Scotland. Among the multitude of tune-books which are now in course of publication is a “ *Scottish Psalm Book* ” containing sixty tunes and sold for threepence. It is published likewise by *Houlston and Stoneman*, London. Would that sixty of the best Methodist tunes could be obtained for the same sum ! Such a work would constitute an admirable pioneer for larger works, and greatly increase their sale, as well as aid in the cultivation of vocal music.

self-supporting they must become self-acting. Not otherwise can their energies be developed. One part of England may act in unison with another part, but England and Scotland are, and, in all probability, for generations to come, will remain too distinct from each other to permit the same united action. Self-action, therefore, in the present case, implies separate action, action distinct from, though not necessarily independent of, the General British Conference. What appears to be required is, an Act of Conference erecting the May District Meeting into a Scottish Methodist Conference, or Synod, thus empowering it to regulate its own affairs ; with the reservation that its acts should require to be ratified by the General Conference in order to their validity ; such reservation to continue in force until Scotland shall become capable of taking upon itself the burden of its own support. The Synod might be held by the President or Ex-President ; and the month of May is certainly a season much more suitable for his visit, than the cold, gloomy month of October ; when hitherto, dreariness without, has corresponded to dreariness within.

A question which might possibly involve legal difficulty would, of course, arise with regard to the Chapel property, since Scotland is included in the provisions of the " Deed Poll." Concerning this

we shall not say more than that the settlement of this question cannot involve difficulties that are insurmountable, whether it be needful to obtain new Trust Deeds, or to register in the Court of Session a Deed analogous to that which *Mr. Wesley* registered in the Court of Chancery, or in whatever way the case may be met. In reference to it, and to the entire case under consideration, there are two questions which, though intimately connected, ought not to be mingled together. The first is, *Ought* this change to be made? the second is, *Can* it be made? It is exceedingly to be desired that a mode of argumentation should not be adopted which would amount to nothing more than an oscillation between these questions, first touching on the question, Ought this to be done? then proceeding to the question, Can it be done? and then returning awhile to the former question, and thus making a continual passage to and fro between them. Let the first question be definitively settled, Ought it to be done? and then the inference will be plain and unavoidable that if it ought to be done, it can be done; and this not only on the common sense principle, that "Where there's a will, there's a way," but on the higher principle of Christian faith, the "faith" which "laughs at impossibilities," and when it is satisfied it *ought* to be done, "cries, It SHALL be done!"

Among the advantages of this step would be, that the Synod would issue its own address on behalf of the Home Mission Fund. Not only would the spirit of Christian liberality be thereby effectually stirred up; but the spirit of nationality, would also be evoked; a most powerful instrument, which hitherto we have wholly neglected, save when we have awakened it to array it against us.

But the most beneficial and the crowning result, would be the raising up a ministry for Scotland of home-growth. The condition of Irish Methodism, whatever it may be, would have been much below its present level, had its best ministers been able to look across the Channel, in expectation of a transfer to England.

But it is plain that something more than even this is needed. The scriptural principle, applied with so much effect in our Mission Stations, must be applied here, if Methodism is to be raised from its present depressed and paralysed condition. The powers of a "Chairman of the District" are not sufficient. Powers similar to those of a General Superintendent are needed, in order to water the existing churches, to plant new ones, to spread a quickening influence, and to constitute a bond of union. This arrangement, we do not hesitate to say, *is the KEYSTONE of the arch,* --the indispensable condition of success, what-

ever other general plans may be adopted. And, when we remember, that the question is one which concerns a kingdom—a kingdom second only to England in importance, in reference to the world's evangelization—a kingdom, too, at our very doors, and separated from England by a mere shadowy line ; it cannot be beyond the bounds of propriety to add that the English Conference could not more worthily place one of its best and most experienced men than in such a position.

But, further ; not less but more pecuniary assistance must for some years be granted, to meet corresponding effort here, if Methodism is to be organised in Scotland on a scale worthy of Methodism at home and abroad.

VII.—SUBSIDIARY MEANS.

1. *For deliverance from our Chapel Debts.*—It is evident that these constitute a most formidable difficulty in the way of bringing about a better state of things, and that our most strenuous and unremitting endeavours must be directed towards their extinction, till that object be fully accomplished. These debts, as we have already seen, are generally traced to the injudicious proceedings connected with chapel-building which took place upwards of 30 years ago ; but had

there not been other causes at work, more powerful, though silent and imperceptible in their operation, our chapels,—or to speak in due Scottish style, our churches,—would not have been in their present condition. To ascertain these causes, let us recur to the principle of comparison. There is a Presbyterian church in Glasgow, which lately divided itself into two or three churches. To do this, all that was requisite was for the flourishing church to make a strong and united effort to build the additional church or churches free or nearly free from debt. When the churches are built, the proceeds of the seat-rents and door collections very speedily become sufficient for the maintenance of the ministry. What our attention in this case is chiefly to be fixed upon is, that each congregation has before it but one object, to which therefore it can give its undivided care,—that object is, to avoid debt upon the church premises. In proportion as that object is gained, its path is open and clear. We, on the contrary, have always two objects,—the sustenance of the ministry, and the payment of a heavy sum annually as interest for the debt upon the church. And since Methodism has never been in a condition sufficiently vigorous to accomplish both these objects, one of them has been of necessity insufficiently attended to. The ministry must be maintained, else the

churches become worthless; and, hence, the churches have sunk deeper and deeper in debt, until many have been utterly overwhelmed, and have sunk out of existence. A minister arriving in a circuit and finding its finances in a condition of utter and distressing embarrassment, has his attention necessarily directed, however disinterested he may be, to that branch of church income which most nearly concerns himself, and therefore diverted from the difficulties with which he feels himself unable to maintain a conflict. The people, also, are prevented from making that continuous and sustained effort to which pastoral influence is in this country essential.

Our chapel debts, we repeat, are our main difficulty, and unless that difficulty be resolutely met and overcome, all seeming prosperity must be utterly fallacious. And for deliverance from the embarrassments which press so heavily upon us, the only resource is in the formation of a Scottish Chapel Fund to aid local effort.

2. *For the Diffusion of a Knowledge of our Principles.*—The want of knowledge which prevails respecting our principles may be said to be all but total. They are confounded with Arminianism or with Morisonianism. The consequence of Methodism being identified with Arminianism in the public mind is, that whatever, rightly or wrongly, is attributed to the latter is

transferred to the former. Take an instance, In the "Testimony" of one of the churches it is said, "We condemn the following errors. . . . That faith and imperfect obedience are the condition of this covenant and of man's salvation. This is the sentiment of the Arminians, who hold that in the gospel a covenant is made, or offered to be made, upon the condition of faith and obedience; and that these now take the place of that perfect obedience which the law originally required." We pause not now to enquire whether this is the "sentiment of Arminians," we merely adduce the statement for the purpose of remarking, that by those who make it, no doubt whatever is entertained that it is, therefore, the sentiment of Methodists; whereas, if there be one doctrine which, more than another is explicitly preached by us, it is, that "faith, and faith alone, is the condition of salvation;" and in reference to works, that if that faith be true and genuine, it naturally and necessarily produces the fruit of obedience. Of Arminianism, there are various shades. Paradoxical as it may perhaps appear, it is nevertheless true, that except in a very qualified sense, we must not go for Arminianism to the writings of Arminius; in other words, the question, practically is not concerning what Arminius taught, but concerning what the great body of Arminians believe; nor is even this the

question, so much as, what Arminians are thought to believe. Hence we ourselves, as a body of Christians, are accustomed to speak of our own principles, as those of an “evangelical Arminianism.” Our proper business, therefore, is not to defend Arminianism, or even to explain it, but to explain and defend Methodism. That this is the case will be seen the more conspicuously if we consider the relation of Arminianism to Calvinism, and of Methodism to both. The two great cardinal doctrines of Scripture are—Man’s Ruin by Sin, and his Redemption by CHRIST. Arminianism, in some of its varieties, holds loose notions with regard to the former; the doctrine of Human Depravity, if not denied, is held with a faltering hand; while, nevertheless, that CHRIST “died for all” is explicitly preached. Calvinism holds firmly the doctrine of the Fall, and preaches that we are all “by nature children of wrath,” but it also preaches a limited atonement. Methodism it is which teaches, on the one hand, that “*we all* like sheep have gone astray, and have turned *every one* to his own way,” and, on the other hand, that God “hath laid on Him the iniquities of *us all*.” Methodism has its own system of doctrine, symmetrical and complete, so far as this can be affirmed of any human, un-inspired system; let it therefore be freely, and without reserve, proclaimed as such, and defended

in its own merits; nor let it condescend to seek shelter under the wing of any other *ism* whatever

But what shall be said of the strange, humbling fact that Methodism is almost universally identified in the public mind, not only with Arminianism, but with Morisonianism? Concerning this system—if system it be, being destitute of a written standard—it is difficult to speak with truth without incurring the charge of uncharitableness. It certainly coincides with our own in one particular, but differs from it in almost every other. From the statements we are about to make, we gladly make exception in reference to some of the ministers of that body and a number of its members, whose doctrines approach nearer to the true evangelical standard than is the case with those of their brethren. This system, then, as embodied in its popular periodicals and in the writings of its chief men, denies Original Sin, and destroys the essence of Repentance and of Faith. With regard to Original Sin, which *Mr. Wesley* well termed “the foundation of religion,” it makes a distinction between the qualities of the heart, and the exercises of the heart, and confines sin to the latter. Repentance is a “change of mind;” and Faith, intellectual belief. The difference between Morisonianism and Methodism may be

stated in a word to be this,—that the former is war against a dogma or doctrine, while Methodism is what *Dr. Chalmers* emphatically termed it after listening, on a certain occasion, to a Methodist minister, “war against sin.” And yet this system of negations, which it is to be feared, will yet exercise the blighting influence of a moral upas-tree, is supposed to be essentially one with our own. Of Calvinism, it alleges that it does not preach a free gospel; but of itself, we must say, that while what it preaches is free enough,—alas! it is not the gospel. Surely the use and rapid spread of such a system, constitutes a loud and heart-rending call, that we should take effectual measures to cause a knowledge of our distinctive principles to spread throughout this land; for the benefit of the public, that we may no longer be viewed through the medium of strong prejudice; for the benefit of our own people, who, in some places, are becoming absorbed by the churches of the “Evangelical Union;” and for the benefit of that body itself, that its members may become acquainted with our protest, kindly but unequivocally given, that thus we may convey the light of pure gospel truth to some who have honestly sought it, but failed to find it.

For this purpose, it is needful that, along with other measures, an organ of communication with

the public mind, through the medium of the press, be established,—a Scottish Methodist Magazine. Such a journal would possess many advantages. It would expound and illustrate our principles with especial reference to the surrounding controversies; it would place us in communication with the organs of other churches; it would give an account of the progress of the “work of GOD” in this country, and explain and urge our financial schemes. It would thus have the effect of rallying the energies of our people, and uniting them in an enlightened and vigorous effort to establish and extend our religious operations. Excellent as our English periodicals are, they can never supply the place which ought to be occupied by one which is distinctively Scottish. And yet, though Scotland abounds with the periodicals of other denominations, we have not one,—no, not a *Penny Magazine*.

But, again. Means should be taken for spreading our Literature. The only work calculated,—and it is admirably calculated,—to exhibit Methodism aright, which of late years has found its way in any considerable numbers into this country, is “The Successful Merchant.” And that work would have been as little known as our other Methodist works, had it not been confided to what is termed an agency. Could not

agencies be established in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen ?

IN CONCLUSION.

At the close of the labours of a century what is our present position ? We have not a single church throughout Scotland which can be truly said to be self-supporting ;—not in Edinburgh, where around our church in that city the pristine glories of early Methodism yet linger ;—not in Glasgow, whose “ merchants are princes ; ”—not in Stirling and Doune, where we have two churches built free from debt, a manse and a not inconsiderable endowment ;—not *anywhere* ! Are these facts so, or are they not ? For “ facts are chiels that winna ding.”

The whole case hinges upon this question, Shall Methodism in Scotland be abandoned, or shall it be maintained ?

If it is to be abandoned, there are two modes of accomplishing this.—The first is to withdraw at once and entirely. The effect of this withdrawal could only be to proclaim to ourselves and to others that Methodism in this country is an entire failure ; that either it was not needed, or that we were deficient in the zeal or the skill requisite for adapting it to Scotland ; that, in consequence, we were compelled to withdraw our

ministerial staff, and leave our friends who have stood by us through so many conflicts, to contend, as best they may, with difficulties which will remain, even when we are gone, and to attach themselves to other churches. "But why speak of withdrawal—to entertain the thought is not possible!" Certainly we believe that such a decisive and complete withdrawal as is here described is not possible, even in thought, but it certainly would be preferable to the second plan which it is understood has been made the subject of conversation. It is this—to concentrate our strength upon the chief places. But to which of the places can we point which may not prefer as good a claim to be continued as any others? We may abolish some of the minor places and thus *contract* our operations, but that contraction will produce no concentration. This contraction is not, so far as it goes, to be distinguished in any respect except in its motive from destruction. We should have, as the result, a small, very small, pecuniary gain, and an immense moral loss. For the same reasons which prompt to the abolition of these places, would, if consistently carried out, apply with equal force, at no distant day, to the abolition of the remainder. Scotland itself would reject us and cast us out from very shame, if we attempted to carry on our operations on a scale so miserably contracted. To sound a re-

treat would prove the signal for utter discomfiture. Were Methodism to die out in this country, the effect would be felt, not in this country alone, but wherever Methodism exists; its extinction here would send a chilling, freezing influence to the very vitals and heart of Methodism. This paralysing, deadening influence would be felt in England, and thence be carried throughout our vast Mission field. The difference, therefore, between this plan and the former, is only the difference between slaying Methodism by inches and slaying it outright, and none can doubt which would be the more merciful and honourable course of procedure.

The question here arises—if it is a question—Does Scotland *need* Methodism? There are some in this country who hint to us, in terms not obscure, that we scarcely are needed; that, though it may be very benevolent on our part to put ourselves to so much trouble, our efforts and our presence might well be dispensed with. But those who feel the most inclined to speak thus, are not persons, the condition of whose churches would lead us to a similar conclusion. There are none who feel aright with regard to the large “outfield” population, but would gladly hail as co-adjutors those, whose system has produced elsewhere, as is confessed on all hands, results so beneficial, causing the moral “wilderness to

rejoice and blossom as the rose." Nor can it be said that the churches of this country are contending successfully with the ungodliness of the multitudes who are never found within the walls of the sanctuary. Their action is denominational and anti-popish rather than directly spiritual. And precisely such a population as that in which Methodism won the most glorious of its early triumphs in England, is on the increase in Scotland. And who that looks upon the torpor which to so great an extent pervades the Scottish churches, can doubt that a church exhibiting a higher standard of spirituality, and a nearer approach to the warm, free life of primitive Christianity, is needed? And if Methodism is not that church, if we are not prepared to "come to the help of the LORD against the mighty," GOD will assign the work which must be accomplished, and *will* be accomplished by ourselves or by others, to a people "raised up" as "from the stones," who will fulfil all His pleasure. Assuredly in the events which have taken place during the last few years, and in the still more important series of changes which are fast tending towards a deeper and more wide-spread consummation, breaking up the national mind, and laying it open to new influences, as it never was laid open before since the rise of Methodism,—in these

events, a door is, as it were, opened in heaven, and the voice of the Great Head of the Church is heard speaking to us as a church and people, in tones of deepest love, of most solemn and tender warning, "Take heed that no man take thy crown!"

But, if it be true that Scotland needs Methodism, it is also true that *Methodism needs Scotland*.* "The World is my Parish!" said our

* We here insert an extract from "The People's Day." The testimony of the writer of that pamphlet, may be taken as that of a witness peculiarly impartial. "Our working population may be divided into three classes, English, Irish, and Scotch. In Ireland—at least in the south and west—the labouring classes are not deeply impressed with the opinion that the day ought to be given to subjects "exclusively theological." Are they quite free from "that ignorance which we all lament?" Among the working people of England, the conviction that the whole day ought to be religiously kept is much more extensively diffused, and so are the advantages of education in about a corresponding degree. In Scotland, this conviction is still more extensively diffused. In a degree corresponding, the people rise in education and intelligence above those of the other two countries; *an intelligence which, in every field of mental activity, whether literature, commerce, or the public service, gives to Scotland an amount of power much beyond that due to her on the ground of the proportional amount of her population*; and this in the face of the national vice of whiskey drinking, which sorely defaces the country, blunts the edge of every moral lesson that otherwise might be drawn from the case of Scotland; and, but for the powerful counteraction of religious teaching, and a holy Sabbath, would have reduced her as low as ever Ireland fell."

Founder. And this is the legacy which he has bequeathed to us—to make the world our parish; not by endeavouring to take direct territorial possession, but by “spreading scriptural holiness” everywhere; partly by our own efforts, and partly by animating other churches, and “provoking them to love and good works.” England and Scotland stand together in a position resembling that of the “Two Witnesses” in the Apocalypse, “prophesying, standing before the LORD of the earth.” The conversion of Britain, would be in a substantial sense the conversion of the world. To what region of the globe can we direct our way, but we meet the Scotchman? And the lives of such men as M’Cheyne show the deep and intense religious earnestness of which the nation is capable, when once a higher spiritual life is attained,—an earnestness, the basis of which is the “*perfervidum Scotorum ingenium*” of an ancient writer. And could Methodism in this country reach a condition of vigour and efficiency, is not an appropriate Mission Field already marked out for its exertions—the Highlands, the Orkneys, and Hebrides, for which as yet we have done nothing? But here we pause for the present, lest the men whose faith never beholds visions of the future, nor delights itself in them—and who seem not to know that the most stupendous realities with

which Christianity has yet blessed the world were, in the first instance, nothing more than visions,—should inform us that all this is—“visionary!”

To the question, then, Must Methodism in Scotland be maintained, or must it be abandoned? we will assume that, from all the Methodist Churches, the wide world over, there is and can be, but one response,—a response deep and solemn, “as the sound of many waters—“Methodism must not be abandoned, it must be maintained.” This reply contains virtually an answer to the question, Shall the present anomalous system be maintained? This cannot be. It does not possess sufficient vitality; nor can we, with all our efforts, infuse vitality into it.

We will, for argument's sake, suppose there are two modes by which we may endeavour to maintain a true and proper Methodism here. The first is, to attempt to set it up in its English form and type,—that is, to commence anew the experiment and conflict of the past century. But, surely, no one can be found who will seriously recommend this. If this cannot be done, the only plan which remains,—but the substantial and sufficient plan—is, to give it the requisite facilities for developing itself according to its own Scottish form and type. For if it be asked why it has never taken root in

Scotland, the reply is, Because it has never been planted. The Methodism which has hitherto existed has been the boughs of English Methodism overshadowing the land. But if its “stock is to *take root* in the earth,” it must be planted, it must receive a distinct and appropriate organization. Then will it become a “tree bearing fruit,” somewhat diverse, perhaps, from that of its southern neighbour, but “bearing fruit after its kind.”

There are cases, in which, if the mariner keeps timidly by the shore, he involves himself in continual difficulty and danger; whereas, if he launches boldly into the deep, his vessel ploughs the main with safety and success. So is it with the vessel of Methodism—a right noble vessel, if we only have confidence in her powers. But this inshore sailing has kept us among the shoals and breakers. Let us “launch out into the deep, and let down our nets for a draught;” for it is only in the deep that the heavy draught is to be gained. In other words, Methodism in this country has hitherto been a mere appendage to a Society or Church in another country. The time has fully come, when, in the Providence of GOD, the decision is required to be made, whether, on the one hand, it shall absolutely cease to exist, or drag out a lingering existence, worse, in certain senses, than no existence at all;

or, on the other hand, become a Church, with the organization and appurtenances of a Church.

WHEREFORE: ALL HAIL THE DAY THAT SHALL WITNESS THE ESTABLISHMENT, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF "THE SPIRIT POURED OUT FROM ON HIGH," OF A SCOTTISH METHODIST CHURCH!

N O T E.

THE substance of the preceding remarks was circulated in manuscript, among certain members of the ministry and laity of our own and other denominations, during several months. In consequence of this, the kindness of a lady places copies of this Tractate in the hands of the President, the Ex-President, the Chairmen of Districts, the Ministers stationed in Scotland, and the Members of the General Missionary Committee.

Also, from among the various replies which the writer received, he wishes to give an extract from a lengthened communication proceeding from a gentleman of intelligence, a member of another church :—

“ The case made out for a denominational organ is complete. I can bear testimony to the ignorance concerning Methodism, both as to its doctrines and discipline—an ignorance which is all but universal—and of which instances, such as here adduced, might be multiplied *ad infinitum*. It seems singular, that long ere now the appropriate remedy has not been applied.

“ The Class-Meting is one of the best features of Methodism, in harmony both with the genius and the usages of primitive Christianity. It is matter of surprise that something analogous to it has not been adopted by other churches.

“ In the conclusion, the main question is brought to issue very clearly and emphatically. And to that question, Methodists

can have but one reply. They cannot, *dare* not withdraw; and, at the same time, they can scarcely hope to remain as they are.

“Allow me, in closing, to echo the cry—Let Methodism be maintained. Were Methodism and its exhibitions of earnestness withdrawn, we see not how the blank would be filled, nor how the fatal effects of such a deficiency could be obviated. For the sake, then, of the Christianity of Scotland, which it so favourably influences, and for the sake of the masses of our large towns—now neglected—which it would assist in reclaiming, by all means let Methodism be maintained, and in order to its maintenance, extended and developed after the model which is now set forth.”

Another gentleman, of distinction in the literary world, and a member of a still different church, concludes his communication thus: “If this scheme were carried out, it would confer upon Scotland a boon of incalculable value.”

For giving such extracts no apology is needed, inasmuch as they are rendered necessary by the peculiarity of the case. The question has two aspects, a Methodist and a Scottish aspect. These testimonies relate to the latter; it is for Methodism itself to decide in reference to the former.

If any one should be disposed to find fault with anything in these pages, let him recal to mind the fact, that so confessedly enormous are the difficulties which beset this subject, that the matter has been of late years taken up by Conference, but hitherto without the desired result having been attained.







