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1820
A *3*
DEFENCE
OF
THE METHODISTS
WHO DO
NOT ATTEND THE NATIONAL CHURCH,
BUT WHO
AVAIL THEMSELVES
OF
LIBERTY OF CONSCIENCE.

BY **THOMAS TAYLOR.**

"Let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind,"
Rom. xiv. 5.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good"
1 Thess. v. 21.

"We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we
have defrauded no man."



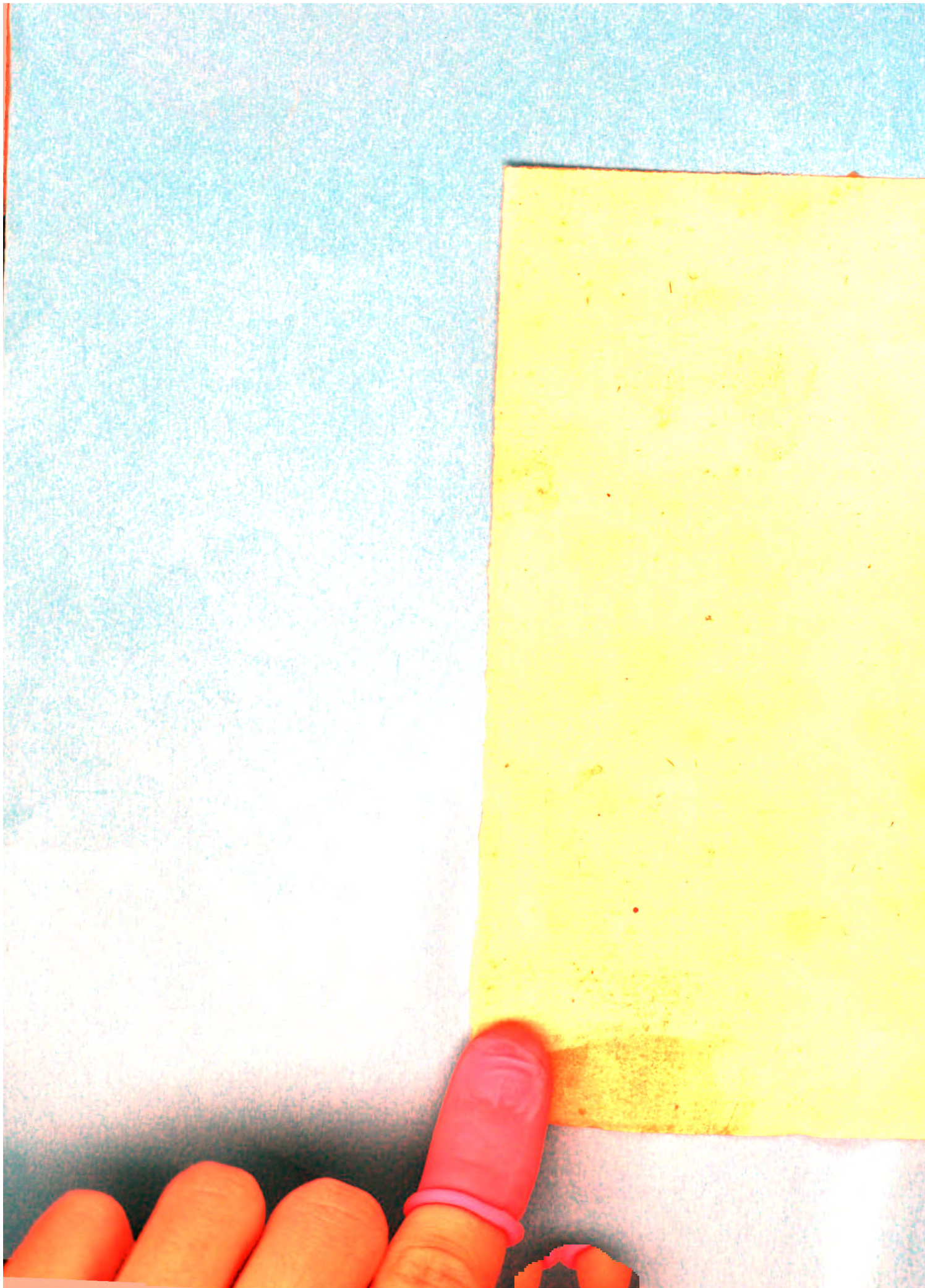
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Nathaniel Carnethon

TO THE READER.

THE following pages were first published in the year 1793, in order to remove prejudice from the minds of many of the people of England, and to assist in giving scriptural and rational views of religious liberty.

At that period the great question respecting the receiving of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper by the Methodists, from the hands of their own ministers, was strongly agitated; and it cannot be doubted, that this little tract contributed largely to settle the question in that country.

The points relative to this important subject—a subject of vital interest to the church of CHRIST amongst us, are now under investigation in Ireland,

where it is hoped they will meet with the same candid, impartial discussion as they have had in the parent society.

Indulging this hope, the publisher presents the original tract (with a few trenchments) with no small pleasure to the consideration of the Methodist, believing that it takes a full and impartial view of the subject, and resting assured, that after giving it a fair and unprejudiced perusal, the man who has not a full conviction of the propriety and utility and excellence of the reception by the Methodists, the ordinance of the LORD, from their own preaching, must be convinced by something more than undeniable facts and conclusive arguments. To 'the Father of lies' therefore, 'who giveth wisdom' to them who earnestly seek it, he most cheerfully commends the reader, praying that his faith may be built up in the faith of the Gospel, and enjoy, through CHRIST, a heritage incorruptible and undimmed, and which fadeth not away.

MR. TAYLOR'S PREFACE.

IT is well known by numbers yet living, in how deplorable a state true religion was in the beginning of this century.— The very form of godliness was forgotten among all descriptions of mankind, both teachers and such as were taught; they lived without God and without hope in the world, seeking death in the error of their way, and none caring for their souls. If there were a few (as there has been a seed in all ages) that had real piety, they were as lights put under a bushel, so that few saw their light. It did not so shine before men as to glorify their Father which is in heaven; so that they were in some measure like salt which has no savour, therefore their neighbours still lay in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in misery, wretchedness and ruin.

In the midst of this dark and general apostasy, God, in infinite pity, was pleased to raise up some faithful witnesses to

shew poor sinners their transgressions, and the nation in general their iniquities. Some of those had, in every sense of the word, a liberal education, being brought up in the most celebrated seminaries in the world. Others had no higher advantages than that of a private education, and some none at all, except what was acquired by hard and close study. God put his Spirit upon them, called them out from under the hedges, and by them gathered many precious souls. In doing this they met with much opposition from the wicked of people. Often were they persecuted, and some might be said to be martyrs in consequence of the ill usage they met; that is, their days were shortened by the hurts and hardships which they received in this arduous but glorious work.

In many places, the souls that were gathered in, wished for private instruction, as well as public preaching, for that end were formed into societies. They also wished to have everlastening mercies administered to them, but

whom God sent to call them out of darkness and misery, and in some places it was granted them very early, especially in London, where they have been favoured with service at the most convenient hours, and also the Lord's Supper, and that constantly. As many societies in the country have as much need of both these favours as those in London—they have long solicited them, and whenever they could shew sufficient reasons for their request, they have been granted.

As calls of this sort daily increase, from the good already done thereby, the warm churchmen seem much alarmed and have raised a mighty stir in the nation, more especially since the decease of Mr. Wesley, the leading instrument of the great work which God has been working for fifty years past in these kingdoms. One might imagine that we were without the bible, and that liberty of conscience were at an end. It would not be amiss therefore to enquire, whether the people who desire the privileges of Englishmen, have scripture, reason, or the laws of their country, on their side.

From the beginning, we have had the whole world against us. We have been stoned, dragged through the streets, put into ponds, prisons, and have died for our lives. We have been often cold, hunger, weariness and pain; now when we might expect a little ease, especially those among us who have worn out the prime of their days, who find their strength beginning to fail, it seems as if we had all to begin again, and our foes are become the men of our own household. What have we done to merit such an outcry? Why, we do not go to church; we preach in churches, hours, and we baptize children; and we administer the Lord's Supper, and great numbers of people come to hear us at those hours, and have their children baptized, and also come to receive the Lord's Supper with us. There are our high crimes and misdemeanors, and for which we are threatened with death itself; and against whom inquiry has been enquired into, and every engine set to work, as though we were the vilest monsters upon earth.

A DEFENCE, &c.

I PURPOSE in the following tract, first, to consider some reasons in favour of those who wish to assert their privileges, and avail themselves of the liberty of their country—secondly, to answer some objections—thirdly, to make some remarks upon a nameless pamphlet—fourthly, to take some notice of a sermon, printed in the Arminian Magazine for May and June, 1790—and lastly, to make a short and affectionate address to my much esteemed brethren in the ministry.

I begin then with some reasons why our brethren cannot join with the established church.

It may not be amiss just to premise, that if any thing occurs in the following pages which may seem to bear hard upon the established clergy, respecting either life or doctrine, or the hierarchy of the church, it is extorted in our just defence, or I should have quietly passed them by, and left them just as I had found them; although I have not said a tenth part of what might be said, or even what the Bible says, and what they will find an awful and incensed Deity will speak, when he calls them to give an account of their stewardship. My intention is only to shew, that we have very sufficient reason for taking the steps which we have, and that we are sufficiently warranted from the oracles of God.

First—Many of those who were brought up in the community of the established church have never found it profitable to them. They lived, as the

generality do, who are in that communion, God and without hope in the world, that is, rebellion, in drunkenness, in prophanity, the sinful pleasures of the age. In short *were in the flesh and could not please God* in this state they went on, thronging the do road, seeking death in the error of their w ing in an unregenerate state, having the mind which is enmity against God, which subject to the law of God, neither indeed

And if some few of them did not go to t excesses in riot, yet they were contented in a form of godliness, while strangers to its In this state of carnality and enmity they w hasting to everlasting destruction, until it God to bring them to hear the pure gospel ed with power. They then saw the dang were in, and those about him; they cried f cy to the God of mercy; they confessed sook their sins, and found that mercy wh found them. But in their distress, they f help in or from the church, neither from n or people; nay, on the other hand, they w secuted and laughed to scorn, and the tru is in Jesus, and those who sincerely prea were ridiculed, so that they met with not ill treatment, either from clergy or laity. times the sermons of the former were full of accusations or notorious falsehoods, contra to scripture and sound experience, so that of finding their souls edified, they freque turned with their minds burdened and pai that the bread of life was withheld from th that they were starved, torn and wounded caring for them. Finding they were spend money for that which was not bread, and t bour for that which did not satisfy, they sav that it was their duty to attend the ministry whom the Lord had owned and blessed

souls, the seals of whose mission they were; and in this they think themselves sufficiently authorized from the law of God. They think they have gone long enough to the broken cisterns which can hold no water; they found it a dead ministry, and the teachers in general physicians of no value.

Mr. Charles Wesley speaks very pertinently upon this subject. Note the following lines:

“Inventions added in a fatal hour,
Human appendages of pomp and power,
Whatever shines in outward grandeur great,
I give it up—a creature of the state.
Wide from the church, as heaven from hell is wide,
The blaze of riches and the glare of pride,
The vain desire to be entitled lord,
The worldly kingdom and the princely sword.
But should the bold usurping spirit dare
Still higher climb, and sit in Moses' chair,
Power o'er my faith and conscience to maintain,
Shall I submit and suffer it to reign?
Call it the Church, and darkness put for light,
Falsehood with truth confound, and wrong with right?
No: I dispute the evil's haughty claim,
The spirit of the world be still its name,
Whatever called by man, 'tis purely evil,
'Tis Babel, Antichrist, and Pope and Devil!”*

2. The generality of the ministers are such as God's word forbids us to join with. They neither live nor preach the gospel; they are for the most part such as live in pleasure and dissipation, in avarice and luxury, and in all the fashionable follies of the age. The ministers which our Lord approves of are such as are instructed in the kingdom of God; and such a one is like a wise householder, bringing out of his treasures things new and old. They must “study to shew themselves approved of by God, workmen that need not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.”—2 Tim. ii. 15. The minister of the gospel must be *blameless, vigi-*

* See the Rev. Charles Wesley's epistle to the Rev. John Wesley, page 5.

lant, prudent, of good behaviour, hospita
 teach. Not given to wine, no striker, no
 of filthy lucre, but gentle, patient, not
 ney; ruling his own house well, having h
 in subjection with all gravity. Not a novi
 ing lifted up with pride, he fall into the con
 of the devil.—1 Tim. iii. 2, 7. His out
 duct must be such that he must have a go
 so that there may be no just cause of re
 But is this the character which the gener
 the ministers of the church sustain?
 free from the vices forbidden by the apos
 their conduct manifests the contrary. I
 horse-race or play acted, in any part of
 at which you will not find some of the
 Are not many of them living in open sin
 they not curse and swear, lie and get drun
 such be the ministers of Jesus? Are thes
 whom he calls the light of the world, an
 of the earth? Are these followers of
 such as are instant in season and out of
 such as will not count their lives dear un
 selves, so that they may finish their course
 To say there are some of a different cha
 saying nothing to the purpose. The num
 small, or we should hear or see something
 And why do not those excellent ones ope
 fy against such, as the servants of God d
 the false prophets in the days of old?
 lowship can righteousness have with un
 ness? St. Paul writes, that if any o
 named a brother, be a lewd person, or
 or an idolator, or railer, or drunkard, or
 not to converse with such a one, no not
 him.—1 Cor. v. 12. I think a direction
 plainer, and as such it ought to be compl
 Are the great doctrines of the gospel, in
 ral, preached in the church? I think fe
 so hardy as to affirm it. I grant a sermon

Septem^r 10 1820 by J. Vatti

and then have a few sentences in it which may border upon the truth, and the very same things contradicted even in the very same sermon, and often entirely gainsaid in another—so that it appears to be guess work throughout the whole. But will any man call that preaching the gospel? Would any of us choose a physician, if he were no better skilled in his profession, than such divines are?—Would we entrust our lives and health in such hands? Or should a lawyer be no better acquainted with the laws and constitution of his country, than such divines are with the Scriptures and sound experience, we should not freely venture a cause into his hands in which our sole property depended.

I apprehend, in preaching the gospel, our disease should be clearly described, and our only remedy fairly delineated, and the manner of its application: these should be standing topics, and never kept out of sight. Besides, these great, general, and noble truths, involve in them a variety of other things relative to the life of a Christian, and which no one can properly attend unto, but such as have some experience of the same. The joys and sorrows, hopes and fears, elevations and dejections, temptations and difficulties of a Christian, are such as a stranger intermeddeth not with: and can that man guide my soul, who is a stranger to all things belonging to the Christian warfare? *The natural man, let his calling be what it will, cannot understand the things of the Spirit; they are foolishness to him, nor can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned—that is, only known by the Spirit which the natural man hath not received.—* Now, can any one of sense think that God has called any man to a spiritual work, who has not the Spirit? He may harangue upon doctrines, politics, ceremonies, forms and modes, though he has not the Spirit; but still he is no minister of Christ, no true shepherd, not one who will naturally care

for the flock. And be it observed, no civil power on earth is to choose the officers of God's house. He will choose them himself, and who can stand in his hand, or say, what doest thou? Therefore, when the civil power usurps that authority which God has not given them, the tools of their usurpation are intruders, and such as prove a curse and not a blessing to mankind. The apostle says, if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his; and if he is not a child of God, he is not a private member of Christ, it is not possible that he can be a minister of his. If he be not a child of God, a real Christian, then he is an enemy to God, and an enemy to him who died for him on the cross. Now no prince in his senses will employ an enemy as an ambassador; he will not give any confidence in him, till he is sure of his fidelity, and can we believe a God of infinite wisdom to employ such as are enemies and aliens in his minds, by wicked works, in a trust of such impostors? Will he entrust the sacred mysteries of his Kingdom, to such as will corrupt them? For it will certainly be the case with such as are corrupted by the truth, as it is in Jesus. Such men are in the flesh and cannot please God; their hearts are in enmity against him, they cannot therefore be either his children or ministers. Now I ask you, by what rule of reason, or by what passage of scripture, am I obliged to hear such men—to countenance their ministry, and to bid them God speed? This being the case, I shall now speak in the presence of my brethren, the real naked fact:—We are not obliged, by any rule, in scripture, reason or experience, to countenance such men: but contrariwise, all make against it.

But perhaps it may be said, there are enlightened men in the church, and such as preach the truth, and practice it too, and therefore, where there are such men we ought to hear them. It was ob-

that such ministers in the church as even make a profession of the truth, are very few, and therefore if we were willing to hear them we cannot.— But we have some objections, and we think reasonable ones, against even hearing those, when we can be favoured with what we prefer to what they in general preach. First, they are not our fathers; they were not the instruments in God's hand of begetting us to a lively hope in Christ: their ministry did not reach our state; dead it found us, and dead it left us. Indeed they did not put their lives in their hands to come after us: we might have run to destruction for them; they did not go out into the highways and hedges, lanes and streets, where many of us lay scattered, and ignorant as savages, and such we might have remained for them, seeing they preached only where things were made ready for them, viz. a rectory, vicarage, curacy, lecture-ship. Had our ministers done thus, we might have perished in our sins. But they came forth at the hazard of their lives, without any prospect of reward, save that of doing good; they preached in streets and market places; in cottages and prisons, and often got well pelted with clods or rotten eggs; and were frequently obliged to put up with very poor accommodations, and sometimes knew not where to lay their heads. These were labourers; they entered the harvest with the sickle in their hands, bore the toil and heat of the day, and by that means awakened our sensual, sleepy souls, or we might have perished for ever. Now can any one persuade us to think slightly of those men, to whom, under God, we owe our all? Or can any one persuade us to contemn their ministry, by hearing others when we may hear them? Or by receiving the ordinances elsewhere, when we can receive them from their hands? No; they are our fathers, and we reverence them; they are God's messengers and the glory of Christ.—2 Cor. viii. 23. They

are ambassadors for Christ, who have besought in Christ's stead to be reconciled to God; the ministers by whom we have believed, and the fruits of their apostleship are we in the Lord, and by the fruits we know them. Therefore we desire to honour to whom honour is due.

3. Now we desire our families to hear that gospel which we have found to be the power of God unto salvation. Would a wise, knowing parent who loves his children, either put poison in their way, or suffer it to be mixed in their food? Surely he would not, if he either regarded their lives or their health. Now error, destructive error, insinuates its baneful influence into the minds of all such as are up-grown, and they are too easily led away with it, and thereby fall from their steadfastness; and will not Satan be very ready to assist its operation upon young minds when they sit under its sound? and will God excuse us if we can excuse ourselves, in leading them into so dangerous a temptation?

What numbers in this kingdom have had their minds feelingly touched under the word, and then going to hear the truth contradicted, and a better way to heaven pointed out, fashionable sins dressed up in the robe of innocence, and real religion arrayed in a frightful dress, have had their convictions laid to sleep, and their consciences stunned, and having shook off the painful conviction have hardened their hearts against the truth, and resolved not to come under the sound of it any more; they have been healed slightly, when there has been no true peace in the soul. Now we wish to keep ourselves and families from such a pestilence. We desire them to sit under the pure truth as it is in Jesus, as we know faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God, well knowing it is the way which will make them free.

4. There is no order kept in the church, no discipline that is good for any thing. There is no

vate examination either into the principles or lives of such as are called churchmen; there is no discrimination made concerning who are proper communicants, and who are not; no distinction made between the clean and the unclean; an omission only in the church of England. Some care is taken among all others, whether national or congregational, whether popish, Lutheran, Calvinian, Jew, or Mahometan, they all pay some attention to discipline, but the church of England has none: all come to their sacraments that will, nor did I ever hear of any being repelled, except some few instances where some have been refused because they were methodists*; and a happy circumstance it would have been to the methodists if they had served them all so. Now any one who reads the new testament with attention cannot but see that great care is taken to keep improper persons from the Lord's supper, and other church privileges. In this they imitated the practice of our Saviour who preached publicly to all, but still reserved private matters to his little society, yea, even in his last supper he only permitted the twelve to be with him. It has been objected that Judas was present at those seasons, and our Saviour knew him and what he was. Judas professed himself a disciple of Christ, and was therefore an hypocrite; but the evil of Judas' heart was not manifest but to our Lord who gave him intimations that he knew it; especially the night in which he betrayed him, and perhaps oftener, as we may judge from John vi. 70. Judas did not curse or swear, or get drunk, or prophane the sabbath; at least if he did so he did it privately, so that all that can be inferred from the case of Judas is, that there will be hypocrites in the church of God. But even in the case of Judas, it might be a doubt if he was always permitted to be present with our Saviour and the other disciples; it is pretty clear that he

* Mr. Wesley has been refused the sacrament, and so have I, and others of my brethren.

was not present when our Saviour delivered his most excellent discourse, made that solemn protestation in John xiv. 15, 16, 17; he was then gone out to execute his execrable design. We find the primitive church exceedingly tenacious in that matter, not respecting the lives of such as they admitted to the privileges, but even their doctrines; so that if any man held any erroneous opinion he was rejected, and he abjured it. But until care is taken in that matter in the church of England, what hope can be of profit from her ministers or ordinances?

Now what fellowship can light have with darkness? Or what part can the believer have with an infidel? The supper of the Lord is an ordinance of communion; that is one end of the institution. *The cup of blessing, says the apostle, which we drink, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ? For we being many are one body; for we are all partakers of the bread.** So speaks St. Paul. But what comment is the order of the church of England in this passage? or what kind of analogy is there between them? Our Lord says, "If thy brother offend thee, tell him his fault between him and thee alone—if he will not hear thee, take two or three with thee—if he will not hear them, tell the church—if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as an heathen man, or as a publican." Here again, is there any meaning in all this? what is that meaning? Who, or what is that church we are to apply to in the case of the offender? How are we to tell the offence to the church? Does any thing like this discipline exist in the national church?

5. We again repeat it, we think it a dangerous thing to expose our families to the hearing of such discourses, well knowing that many of them are not a

a proper age to judge for themselves. Or, is it safe for young people to hear the follies of the age pleaded for, such as cards, plays, races, assemblies, balls, and other delusions and vanities, and set forth as innocent amusements, and very proper recreations for young people? We know the evil tendency of such doctrine, and how ready the carnal mind is to receive it, and how dreadfully successful it has been, the lives of many can bear witness throughout the land. How many thousands in the nation, who were beginning to awake out of sleep, and to feel their disease, but by those physicians of no value, have had their convictions stunned; their hurt has been slightly healed, saying, peace, peace, when there was no peace, no real faith, no real change wrought in the soul, and so closing their eyes again are more dreadfully secure than they were before. Are not these facts? do they not occur almost daily? and can any one blame us if we are unwilling to expose such as are under our care to so awful a peril? yea, we might say, almost to inevitable ruin and damnation. The apostle says, be not carried away with divers and strange doctrines; if so, I think we ought to be careful of what we hear, or I don't see how we can escape, however confident we may be of ourselves. A wise man will not go where the plague is, without the most urgent necessity; and what plague is more dreadful than damnable and pernicious errors? If it is said, they may take the good and leave the bad; it may be asked, have all that hear error sufficient judgment so to do? Will not a deceitful heart and a tempting devil rather prompt them the contrary way? And why should we expose either our families or ourselves to such imminent danger? Is it to try our skill? is it not a tempting of providence? do we chuse to go or send to that shop for food where we know that poison is mixed with it? If there were no other shops but such as did mix poison with their goods, we must take the best care we can; but if we know those

that take care to have nothing but what is some, I think we should repair thither; thence is pretty easy. Where we can have the truth preached, both in theory, experience and practice, surely it is there we may hear it.—our Lord bids us beware of false prophets, is nearly the same as if he had said, shun them it not a contempt of truth, and consequently God of truth, when we chuse to pass it by hear error? Can we find any part of the bible vindicate such a conduct? Is it not preferring to the truth, and remaining wilfully ignorant is it not a tempting of God to give us up to be a lie, and the father of lies? Do not even christians pray to be delivered from all *false doctrine* *heresy*; from all hardness of heart, and *contempt of his word*. Now how does such a prayer agree to the conduct of thousands in England? What for that which they are determined to run yea, and are exceeding angry if others will do the same? Let any one reconcile this either to nature or common sense. Like the drunkard prays to be delivered from all evil, and runs directly into the evil, or into the temptation of the evil.

6. We do find many things in the liturgy of the church contrary to the word of God, and which nonconformists in the last century very justly objected to, as in the office of baptism, the visitation of the sick, and the burial of the dead, and confirmation, though we do not lay so much stress on those matters; yet as they are the old religion, and popery it is a pity they are not removed out of the way, as it is to be feared they are no small evil to thousands; and if the church was right, if the members were such ministers as the word of God requires, they would soon remove those monuments of idolatry out of the way, and would serve as Hezekiah did the brass serpent. What have we our bibles for, but that, in life and doctrine we may walk thereby.

7. For want of having the ordinances, we have driven thousands of our people from us, many of whom have thereby imbibed *divers and strange doctrines*; they had the strongest temptations to hear those *strange doctrines*. Now faith comes by hearing, whether it be a right or a wrong faith; it is as natural for me to receive the faith or doctrine I willingly sit under, as it is for the ground to drink in the rain that falls upon it. But can we answer it to our great Head and Bishop, to let those sheep be scattered upon the dark mountains of error, and to fall a prey to every devourer, when it is in our power to open a fold for them, and feed them with the sincere milk of the word. To say, as some have coldly said, let them go, others will come in their place, is just as if a father should say, If my children cannot live upon unwholesome food, let them quit my house, or let them die; I can get more, so that I shall not want a family. Surely this must be the language of a step-father, and whose own the children are not, or he must be a very unnatural parent, and one that cares very little for his posterity. Now it is our duty to train up those children in the way in which they should go. It was a complaint long since made, by the great Shepherd himself, against such as ought to have watched over the flock, that they had not done it. Hence he says, *My sheep wander through all the mountains, and upon every high hill; yea, my flock was scattered upon the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them.*—Ezekiel xxxiv. 6. Must we bring this complaint upon ourselves again? must we drive the sheep upon those barren mountains which the Lord complains of, under the notion of thus going to church? In what part of the bible are we taught this uncouth doctrine. Tell us not of old plans, or even methodist rules, but to the law and to the testimony; and if we find it not there, who are they who will pretend to be wiser than the oracles of God, or will make the word of God of none effect? By

this unscriptural mode of proceeding we have
many away from us, and I am afraid not a
endless perdition. It is said, *Cursed is
maketh the blind to wander out of the way;* and
driving them under blind guides is the way.
And if the blind lead the blind both shall
the ditch.

8. Another circumstance which must have
with all thinking people, and that is the
spirits which have been manifest in all the
parties concerned in this contest. On
the candour and gentleness which has shone
on the side of liberty and freedom, willing
and let think: and on the other side, whil-
tive, lordly, overbearing spirit of violence,
they had received some very material injury
they are not permitted to tyrannise over their
thren. Look no further than the circular letters
which were sent abroad last year, which
firm what is here said. Compare the letters
were sent from Newcastle upon Tyne, Newcastle
under line, Nottingham, and Plymouth do
those sent from Birmingham, Cornwall, &c.
various other places. In how respectable a
do the former treat the preachers as well as
opposing brethren? And what sourness do
tempt both to ministers and people breathe in
ter? The one is like the Prince of Peace,
other has a fierceness that carries menace
tempt in it. I believe our brethren saw this
conference, and it had no small effect upon
minds. And how have matters gone since
utmost perverseness and ill-nature have been
covered in the church party, and innumerable
have been formed and vended abroad, yet
and dark threatenings have issued out, and it
appears that nothing but a fear of the law
land has withheld them from open violence,
which must argue it either to be a bad cause
parties concerned in it: bold defenders, or bold

blessed Saviour never carried on his sacred cause with rage, bitterness, falsehood, invective slander, and calumny. Such methods the papists made use of, and so did the persecuting churchmen for a century and a half; and it is a pity that the same leaven continues to ferment in numbers to the present day. We cannot help seeing this, and it grieves us, we know it is wrong; we are grieved for their sakes, and for the sake of that bless'd cause for which the bleeding Reconciler laid down his precious life. In this they cannot hurt us; but they hurt themselves; nor can the love of God dwell with such tempers, and therefore if they are wise they will seek to have them destroyed.

9. The enjoying our legal right can infringe upon no one, seeing others can possess their liberty equally the same. We want to compel no one, but are quite willing that others should enjoy the same privileges we enjoy ourselves. Therefore we wrong no man, we defraud no man, we persecute no man, nor do we desire to lord it over the consciences of any. We only plead our just right as men accountable to God, as Christians believing and professing the precepts of Christ, who was far from using any constraint, but that of arguments, prayers, and tears, and declared that the pure worship of God was neither confined to the mountain of Samaria, nor to the temple of Jerusalem; but that such as worship the Father must worship him in spirit and in truth. Such is the spirit, and such is the manner of that worship which we contend for. We are willing to leave others in the full possession of every privilege which they can or ought to enjoy. We wish to give the honour to our preachers which we believe due to the ministers of Christ. We will never hear a dead erroneous ministry while we can hear the pure truth which is spirit and life to our souls. But let others judge for themselves. We chuse our ministers to baptize our children, and also to receive the Lord's supper at their hands, and let

any man point out the scripture, or any the primitive church which condemns. Let us have no quibbles, no antiquated traditions; let us have plain bible proofs wrong, and we will yield to conviction. same time, let every man be fully pers own mind; and let him act as God give

II. It may not be amiss just to not the most plausible objections against of conscience which we plead for. "I to Mr. Wesley's rule?" Suppose it is, contrary to God's rule, what great h in the matter? Mr. Wesley never avo to be infallible. I think his rule was, *Love me as I am of Christ.* But then fact. Shew us the rule, or what rule d Do you mean the rules of the society? a word about the church in them? D the poll deed enrolled in the high court declaring what the conference, or what dists are? There is not a word of the ch there. Is it Mr. Wesley's will you ca We do not find the word church in it. letter which he left to be opened and conference, after his death? there is about the church even in that rule ei had there been any such rule as you should have found it in some of the ab ally in the two former; seeing the one i member of the society is obliged to w conform to; and the other is what gives racter, a reality in law. "Well, but exhorted to go to the church, and sacr advised the methodists never to leave th So you say. But if those assertions c contradicted by Mr. Wesley's well know you will bring no small censure either o ley or yourselves. Has not Mr. Wesle dissenter in London these forty years? preached, and administered the Lord's

Spittlefields, and West-street chapels, all those years? or in the Foundery, or New Chapel. And were not all these dissenting chapels? They never were consecrated, the bishop of London had nothing to do with them any more than he had with the Jewish synagoue. Did not the other preachers, in connection with Mr. Wesley, preach in those chapels, and in church hours too, in Mr. Wesley's absence? Did Mr. Wesley ever go to the church in London, except he has been invited to preach occasionally in some church? Did he not preach at Bristol in the church hours? Did he not preach, and administer the Lord's supper, the last Leeds conference, in the church hours? Yes, on the first Sunday in the month just in sight of the parish church. Was not that dissenting? Has he not established a religious economy, or order, and admitted and sent a number of preachers all over the three kingdoms, as well as into America, and the West Indies? Did he not summons those preachers once a year to meet him in conference? and did he not call them to an account respecting their life and doctrine? Could he do all this as a church-man? Who gave him any such power, or who could do it as a church-man? Has he not even formally ordained several of the preachers, and made them promise that they would administer the Lord's supper? Could he or they do this except as dissenters? Are not many of the chapels and preachers licensed as dissenting chapels, and dissenting ministers? And are not both chapels and ministers liable to be fined if they are not so licensed? Is it then agreeable to truth for the preachers to enter themselves as dissenting teachers, if they are not so? or is it agreeable to gospel simplicity to enter the chapels as dissenting meeting-houses if they are not so? But indeed they must be so, seeing it is the statute in that case provided which must characterise them. The act of toleration, which obtains the license, is expressly made for protestant dissenters, and if they

are not such, why do they equivocate? and are, why do they deny it? Therefore Mr. Wesley and all who have laboured in communion with him must have acted as dissenters, whether they were done right or wrong; and we sincerely thank God that they ever did so, seeing many thousands have been savingly brought to God by that means. In the case with Mr. Wesley was this, he was brought up in high church principles, and retained them; but God taught him better. Nevertheless he loved the doctrines of the church, and the liturgy, especially the prayers; but it is certain he did not submit to the hierarchy of the church any more than we do. Indeed he could not; the station in which Providence had placed him was such, that he must either disobey God or man; he chose the latter, therefore was a dissenter. The moment he set up the standard in Moorfield Fields, and called a society, he was a dissenter, and such was the following part of his life, for which thousands have reason to praise God to all eternity.

“ But God has blessed the old plan, and we are not sure that he will bless any deviation from it. Nay, if the Methodists leave the church God will leave them.” So then the matter is settled for ever. That bold assertion I have often heard, but in what part of the bible is it written? If the Methodists leave the church God will leave them? Is there any thing like it in all the bible? No; if we abide in Christ he will abide with us, and if so, we shall never perish. But the *Old Plan*, is so hacknied till it is become a proverb. What do you mean by it? It has been always served that preaching in church hours, and administering the Lord's supper, has been practised forty years, and that in a place where there was little need of it as in any part of England; for there are churches enough, and many of them are well served enough, in London. With regard unto its being blessed, I ask what was blessed, or, who, or what was the blesser? were it in the church

or were it the ungodly priests, or the ceremonies, or vestments, which converted souls from sin? Please to observe what you cannot but know. God put his Spirit upon his servants, and sent them forth into the highways and hedges to proclaim his name to lost sinners; sinners were awakened, made sensible of their sinfulness, and then applied to those messengers of truth, crying, What shall we do to be saved? The servants of God immediately pointed them to the blood of sprinkling shed for a ruined world,

Each felt it apply'd, and joyfully cry'd,
Me, me thou hast lov'd, and for me thou hast dy'd.

That they might be helpers of their faith, they joined them into society, and gave them such advice as they saw necessary from time to time; they directed them to search the scriptures, and wrote and published different tracts to explain and inforce the truths of God upon their souls. Thus they taught them publicly and privately, yea, personally, and this method of dealing with them was what God blessed to them. They exhorted them to abide in Christ, not to grieve his Spirit, but to hold fast the beginning of their confidence stedfast unto the end. Now there was nothing of the church in all this any more than in a Turkish Mosque, or an Indian Pagod. Their eyes being opened they saw the Lord's supper was an ordinance of Christ; yet they saw it was an ordinance of communion; but they saw that neither the ministers nor people were such, as they could have any fellowship with any more than the temple of God could have fellowship with idols, or Christ with Beliel; and therefore repeatedly applied to those to whom the dispensation of the gospel was committed, to give them the Lord's supper; this being repeatedly denied them, many withdrew, and either called ministers to themselves, or joined with such as they believed were called of God, or were driven to seek communion among the different denominations now abounding in England. Now

we want to prevent that dispersion, by being
and having our own ministers to administer
ordinance to us, and to preach to us at su-
venient hours, as that we can bring our fam-
hear them.

But it has been said, "That the Methodi-
the preachers going to church, induces the
people to come to hear the preaching, and
they do good."——So then we must go to
out of policy. Hear this ye church-men!
this walking uprightly according to truth?
walking in craftiness, and according to the
of the world? But let it be right or wrong
the morality of it, it is not true in fact. Ha-
those preachers who avow their liberality o-
ment as many hearers as the most vehement
men? Let matter of fact speak? Had
Whitfield as many hearers as any man in En-
And have not many who are living now a
hearers as those who make the greatest noise
the church? Nay the method which they
is the most eligible way to gain hearers, ye
doers of the work too; and we think they
good success in the work of the ministry.

"But the Methodist preachers will be
baptizing and administering the Lord's su-
will puff them up with pride, and make them
more highly than they ought to think." D-
objection come from such as love the preach-
from such as are sour and prejudiced again-
and who are pleased to see them in a state
tempt? Can such objectors believe God
counted them faithful, putting them into the
try? And hath our Saviour intrusted them
greatest of all works, a dispensation of th-
and given them abilities to divide it acco-
truth; to feed the flock of God; to bring out
treasure things new and old; to set life an-
before mankind; to handle all the great d-
of the gospel, such as the rebellion through

and reconciliation of man through the grand atonement; repentance, faith, and the new birth, together with all which appertain to the christian warfare, and what belong to every relative station of the christian; can he intrust them with all this, and much more connected therewith, and cannot he intrust a little bread and water, or wine into their hands? The thought is absurd; it is irrational, and unscriptural, and reflects upon the wisdom of God as well as upon his servants. Where has God divided the work? Where has he made it the duty of one man to give himself up to the ministry of the word, and to give up secular life to preach the word, and not to dispense the lower parts of the ministry? In what part of God's word do we find such a distinction? In what church history do we read it? Is it not odd that neither the apostles, nor primitive christians, nor even our reformers could find out this singular secret, till late in the eighteenth century a few plain, warm church-men should have the sagacity to discover it! But we have not so learned the oracles of God; nor can we think thus meanly of those whom God has set over us. We grudge them no honour which God has conferred upon them; and this we are taught in his word; Let the elders who rule well be accounted worthy of double honour, ESPECIALLY THOSE WHO LABOUR IN THE WORD AND DOCTRINE, or *teaching*, 1 Tim. v. 17, as some render the word. But our new refiners are of a different mind, for they say, let those who labour in the word and teaching be kept down, kept humble, let us beware of giving any honour instead of double honour; yea, let God's honour and ordinances be prophaned, lest we should lift up those men whom God has honoured in being the instruments of our salvation. Such are the sentiments of those who wish to take from God's servants the honour and office which he has put upon them. In the same light every itinerant preacher must view most of those circular letters which have been sent.

up and down the kingdom, a more insolent was never cast upon a set of useful men than this day that Methodists have had a name to the hour. All the mobs and tumults which there have been in, all the lies and slanders which have been cast upon them, never brought so horrid an affliction upon them, as the men of their own household have. These undermine their reputation among the most sensible part; they labour to invalidate their call to the ministry, and thereby make them appear as a set of vagabonds, impostors, mere imposers upon the world. Now what can satan do more? Such a procedure will serve his cause more effectually than any other in the world. Can we be guilty of such barefaced ingratitude both to God and man? We have sent these men into the highways and heathen lands, in the face of persecution and danger, we ran away from them, and we were convinced that we were ruined sinners, and that we were servants of the Most High sent to show us the way to salvation. Thus our faith came by the word of truth, and not by going to church. However, if any find benefit at church, let them go thither, as they ought to be the best judges of their own state; but they must grant us the same privileges which they assume to themselves. When we apologize for ourselves, we plead our privilege as the just right of mankind, more especially of the Englishmen, and who are favoured with toleration. It seems not a little strange that Methodists should be the only persons in the land who would stand in the flames of persecution who have scarcely been excluded from it themselves, and who are sheltered from the act of toleration.

The ministers putting on gowns and bands, and being stiled, reverend, is a frightful circumstance in the way of those who are so grateful as to look upon them with an evil eye. This objection is made with a very bad grace from such as make it a matter of gowns or any thing of the kind be wrong,

they so fond of going to the places where they are sure the performers will be thus arrayed? I am pretty clear the first preachers of the gospel had no particular dress, but that of sound doctrine and upright conduct, except suffering for their master. At what time particular habits were introduced is very uncertain, they created much contention at the reformation, and for many years after. I have heard Mr. Wesley say, that the gown and cassock, now worn by the established clergy, was the invention of Calvin, therefore we may suppose they do not pretend to wear it *jure divino*, seeing Calvin was a Presbyterian; of course there can be no presumption or sacrilege in the preachers to put it on. I believe in general the Presbyterian ministers do preach in a gown and cassock, yea, and they baptize, and deliver the Lord's supper, as well as the Independants, and who are so ignorant as to charge them with presumption? But as to the *jus divinum* of garments, I scarcely think it will be contested. It is very likely many of the preachers will never put them on, believing them to be the reliicks of popery; but if any congregation chuse to accommodate their minister with a particular garment, as thinking it will make a more respectable appearance, we see no harm in it, it is what is done now by dissenters of most denominations, so that there is no sort of harm in this either one way or the other.

As for the term reverend, can the objectors tell what it means? If they cannot they had as good say nothing about it. It comes from the latin word *Revereor*, to revere or reverence, and according to the courtesy of every country where it is given to the preachers of the gospel, it respects the sacredness of their office, to signify that they are revered on that account. This being its simple meaning, I ask where is the impropriety of giving it to such as deserve it? Whether does it more properly belong to such as devote their whole time and strength to the work of the ministry, or to such as spend a

great part of their time in luxury, in cards, faces, and various other evils. It seems the tortors are very far run for reasons to stoop to pitiful pretences, and great numbers plain evidence they are ashamed of nothing which is glorious, or it would be beneath them to expose their own ignorance so much in bringing forward so contemptible, and what I really should not think worth attention, only it is become the common cuckoo note of many that can say nothing.

The present age seems full of enterprising persons are not satisfied to take things upon Reason, or common sense, is not to be put upon trite maxims, or superannuated customs, nor *old plans, or ways that have been blessed* men will look for themselves; we see it so in agriculture and commerce; had old plans been the rule, a condition had this kingdom been in by this time. Half its inhabitants must have wandered wide to have sought a miserable pittance to keep body and soul together; and yet we find numbers of men and raving, and ready to raise a riot against improvement, as though they were going to be ruined because it is a deviation from some *old* plan.

All national religions have been nationalities, whether Pagan, Jewish, Turkish, or what is called the Christian religion; and it is sure that the majority whether it be right or wrong. My very small acquaintance with our English history will convince us of this.

From the year 1530 to the year 1558 there were four general conversions in the land. In the reign of king Henry the eighth grew weary of his wife, and wanted another, and because the pope would not divorce him from his queen, he was determined to divorce the pope, and became pope himself. This therefore required all his subjects, lords spiritual and lords temporal, with the clergy and commons of the realm, to abjure pope Leo, and install king Henry. It was done, and the king's bloody

were sworn to, and a very few had the fortitude to suffer death, rather than swear and act contrary to their conscience. Upon the death of that furious king, and the accession of Edward his son, things took another turn, an entire revolution took place. Transubstantiation, purgatory, with the greatest part of the superstitions of Rome were discarded. Here again was a general veering of lords spiritual and temporal, &c. except a very few who were hardy enough to die. Upon the decease of that excellent young prince, Mary mounted the throne, and thus every thing turned back into the popish channel, *the old plan* obtained the ascendancy, the pope's supremacy, with all the infamous lumber of idolatry, attended with its usual cruelty and persecution, and in the general the lord's spiritual, &c. were as obsequious as usual, only by reading the scriptures, and the preaching which had been in the preceding reign, numbers were more enlightened, and had tasted the good word of God, so that some hundreds laid down their lives. But what were they to the nation at large? that poor tool of tyranny and idolatry being removed her sister succeeded her, not possessing one spark more of real religion, but possessed much more policy and ambition, the wheels turned round again, and that with as general a conformity, so that in the space of twenty-eight years the national church was converted, and reconverted four times; but mark, let it be Papist or Protestant, or a medley of both, it was always true to what I have observed, to wit, tyranny and persecution. I wish every Englishman to be perfectly acquainted with that period and what was transacted, so that he might see the absurdities people run into when traditions are set up instead of the word of God. What unremitting persecutions followed, excepting the time of the common-wealth, I have already touched, till the happy Era of 1688, a period that all lovers of the Bible and religion have abundant reason to bless God

for; and let all the followers of the Prince be very fearful how they attempt to fasten a yoke upon their brethren or to lord it over the consciences of those whom their Saviour has made free.

“ But the preachers baptizing, and administering the sacrament will destroy the itinerant plan, they will want to settle with the principal congregations, and then they will grow as formal as the others. There is no ground for this fear: we do not know of one preacher who has the smallest intention of settling in any kind. In the general, when they have been several years in any place, they are very willing to leave it. They see examples enough both in the settled clergy and the dissenters, of many of their being weary of them, and of their being of little use after their remaining several years in any place, although those ministers may be good men and may as preach the truth, and I dare say, some are heartily weary of their station. Besides, the preachers of the Methodist chapels are so settled that no preacher can stay above three years, and in some not above two, and in some they can dismiss him at the end of one if they choose.

Thus provision is made for the continuance of the itinerant plan, so that if any drone has lounged away his life in one place he cannot. Those who have spent their strength in their work, and are worn out in the honourable service, every preacher contributes annually one guinea of his small income towards their maintenance, although this would fall short, yet kind Providence has put it into the hearts of many, both in the society, and such as hear them, to contribute generously; so that those worn-out veterans are kept down, and just preach as much as they are able whatever part of the kingdom they chuse to spend their days. Thus the travelling plan will continue up without doubt. A most excellent scheme in which the various gifts are so diffused and blended

the people that each has a portion given them in due season. In this the Methodists are privileged above all other people. May they improve by this as well as every other means which they enjoy!

III. I shall now make some remarks on a nameless pamphlet which issued from Liverpool, in January last. This production consists of Mr. Wesley's reasons against separation (printed many years ago in the height of his church zeal, and nearly given up in his later writings) some partial extracts from the last journal, and a scurrilous pamphlet published and despised in the year 1786, and a reference to a sermon from Heb. v. 4.

Whatever bears Mr. Wesley's name I shall always honour; I honoured him while living, above all men in the world, his memory will be dear to me while I live. In essential matters I cordially agree with him; in circumstantials he allowed me to think and act for myself, or I could not have continued in connexion with him. I did not hide my sentiments from either him or the conference. I was under no temptation or necessity to do it. But it may not be amiss to premise two things, the first is Mr. Wesley's definition of the church of England. "The 19th article defines a true church to be a congregation of faithful people wherein the pure word of God is preached and the sacraments duly administered." According to this account, the church of England is, that body (of holy believers) in England among whom the pure word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered.* In another place he asserts, that the "church of England are all the believers in England."† If that is the case then I aver, we are the church of England; for we preach the pure word of God to many faithful companies, and what we plead for is, *duly* to administer the sacraments to them.

2dly. I premise, that let the reasons be what they may, they were the reasons of Messrs. John and

* See 4th Journal, and the Appeals.

† Magazine for June 1786.

Charles Wesley only, and only subscribed to them, and therefore whatever obligations they are under themselves, from thence it only binds them to perform those obligations; they affect any one else, of course these reasons are no wise binding to either preachers or people, solely to those who made and subscribed to them. It may further be observed, except a man sets himself up to be infallible, he may with propriety follow his judgment when he sees clearer, for that is acknowledging that he is wiser to-day than he was yesterday. Therefore if Mr. Wesley has been wrong from the subsequent reasons it is but granting him the right which belongs to every man who professes himself to be fallible: this may suffice for an answer to the first reason. The 2d, 3d, 4th, and 5th reasons are nearly alike, viz. "giving offence to the people from coming to hear and causing them to separate from us, &c."

The answer is very easy. In things of a different nature it is wise not to give offence. We apprehend the avowed essentials of religion, and the solemn ordinances of God are not in our power; nor are we at liberty to change them, nor make them subservient to state policy or human maxims, in so doing we should adulterate the word of God, and thereby make it of none effect. For giving offence we cannot help that; the carnal mind is enmity against God, and the friendship of the world. The messages of the prophets were charged with are often stiled "words of offence" because they were calculated to give offence. They were charged to be faithful in delivering them. In Deut. iv. 2. and xii. 32. Rev. xxii. 3. Likewise Jer. i. 7. Ezek. xxxiii. 1, 10. Our Lord give offence both in life and doctrine. Did he not say, I am come to send fire on the earth? Yet he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and his mouth was no guile. Did not his apostles

* Luke xii. 49, 54.

fence? and who were more offended than the Jews, especially their rulers and teachers? and did not our Lord say, they were blind leaders of the blind, and that both should fall into the ditch; the ditch of error here, and into eternal perdition hereafter. Did not the primitive Christians give offence? As likewise the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, those first reformers from popery and superstition. Did not Luther and all the reformers give offence? Did not the nonconformists give offence; yea even Mr. Wesley's ancestors, his great grandfather, Bartholomew Wesley; his grandfather, John Wesley; his grandfather by his mother, Dr. Annesley; Did not these men give offence to church bigots, for which they suffered the spoiling of their goods, yea moreover bonds and imprisonment. And finally, I ask, who has given greater offence in this age than Mr. Wesley himself? Let any one read his journals and his appeals, and they will find all manner of evil spoken against him, and oftentimes violence offered to his person; so that whatever he may have said of his being churchman has not taken away the scandal of the Cross.

REASON 6th. "Because it would be throwing balls of wild fire among them that are quiet in the land." "Balls of wild fire!" What enforcing the plain scripture doctrines, and plain scripture discipline! Certainly such are balls of God's own making, namely that pure truth should be held forth, and in such a case we are not answerable for the consequences. This reason is pretty much like the former.

REA. 7th. "Controversy is now asleep!" No, Sir, not that controversy, witness the numbers which church bigotry has driven from us, and is daily driving from us. Witness the numbers of chapels built in various parts of England by such as have been thus driven away for want of liberty of conscience.

Ibid. "O what would many of our forefathers have given to have enjoyed so blessed a life as we have now?"

Answer. All they had in the world except a conscience; yea many of them did so, with their great-grandfather and your two grandfathers, who took that calm, that birth-right of a free man being, from them? Who banished, who imprisoned your forefathers, and thousands were they not the unmerciful bigots of the Church, whose offspring are itching to follow their footsteps, only there is that plaguey, obnoxious act of non-resistance in the way.

Ibid. "It would engage me in a thousand controversies, both in public and in private." No, Sir, not half so many as the steps you have taken in acting throughout a dissenter, calling yourself a churchman; such a profession is much harder to defend than honestly avowing you were a dissenter. This would only be your privilege as a minister of the New Testament, and more especially as an Englishman. In the honour of your venerable ancestors that have joyfully the spoiling of their goods and their bonds and imprisonment for the sake of a conscience, I wish you had never been ashamed of the name nor nature of a nonconformist. A dissenter you were; God made you free, and therein owned your labour, for which he will bless his holy name to all eternity.

REA. 8th. "To form the plan of a new church would require infinite time and care, &c."

Answer. "A new church!" What is the good talk of a new world, or a new God! I have not often asserted, that "the visible Church of Christ is a company of faithful men where the gospel is preached and the ordinances be lawfully ministered." I hope many companies of men and women too are raised up in various parts of the world.

Baptist from James 13+10



the pure gospel to them and *duly administer the sacraments according to Christ's ordinance.* The latter of these implies the order and discipline that is to be observed in the house of God, and that will require no more trouble than we have at present; for I hope we have not any in the society but such as we can admit to the Lord's Supper:

REA. 9th. "Separation will cause prejudice against the clergy, &c." Answer. Do not the doctrines which they teach, and the lives which they live, do this, more than all the Methodists put together? By their own mouths and actions they are condemned. And I know none who hath written sharper things against them or bestowed keener epithets, except the bible, than Mr. Wesley himself has, when he calls them *heathenish priests, mixed infidels,* and has been in doubt forty years what obedience he owes them, and the obedience which he gives them has been with a *doubting conscience.* Surely this is saying enough in all reason. If one wish to see more let him read Mr. Wesley's Appeals and his Address to the Clergy, and several of his Journals.

REA. 10th and 11th. These are nearly alike, "Because the experiment has been too frequently tried already, and that success never answered the expectation."—"We have melancholy instances of this," &c.

ANSWER.. Where has it been fairly tried without success? Is it in London? where it has been about forty years. Why have you not given it up then? Is it in Bristol? Why did you continue it? Is it in Plymouth-Dock, where it increased the society near 400? Is it at Nottingham, or Birmingham, or Sheffield? Is it at Altringham, Delph, Bradshaw, or Hunslet? in all which places the service has been in church hours for years? Is it in America, or the West Indies? Is it in Scotland? Perhaps it may be said it has been hurtful in Dublin. Pray,

if so, who was the cause of the hurt? the furious bigots in the society? The cause as if I should take a particular method, tilling my field, but my neighbour says it is a wrong method; and insists I shall not use that method which has been taken for years. The cause that has brought forth some fruits. He will make good his usurped power and dominion. In short, he raises a mob, obstructs me in my way, pulls down my fences, roots up my plants, and exclaims my land has been barren since I began the new method. Such was the case in the case of a number of zealots were determined to do their own way right or wrong, and the people were not soft enough to give way to them.

REA. 12th. "By such a separation we shall throw away the peculiar glory which God has given us."

ANSWER. The peculiar glory which God has given us is, saving souls, not by going to the door, but by preaching the gospel to every creature, whether in the church or not in the church; but the greatest obstruction in that blessed work has been the churchmen.

IBID. "And we have no desire to be a compact body." Then why are we legally bound to our enrollment in the high court of cha-

IBID. "We look upon the clergy, as a part of these our brethren; but as that which God by his adorable Providence has called to be watchmen over the rest."

ANSWER. What! are those *heathenish* *mitred infidels* your brethren? And are you as these "whom God by his adorable Providence has called to be watchmen over the rest of the church." The part of the bible is this strange doctrine. I thought the like of those had run through the streets, and not sent them.—Jer. xxiii. 32.

IBID. "To express either contempt

towards them betrays AN UTTER IGNORANCE OF OURSELVES."

ANSWER. Can any thing be more contemptuous than the terms *heathenish priests*, or *mitred infidels*? And is not that the character which Mr. Wesley gives them, and was he UTTERLY IGNORANT OF HIMSELF?

Ah, my venerable and much esteemed father, these thy pretended friends have done thy memory the greatest injury they possibly could. They, in an evil hour, fixed upon the only material thing wherein thou wert inconsistent in thy vast labours for more than fifty years, and in thy voluminous writings. In the warmth and simplicity of thy heart, in the beginning of thy days thou didst express thyself a little unwarily, and thy bigoted friends would not allow thee second thoughts, but are determined in words to make thee contradict the whole tenor of thy useful life, and unparalleled labours. Methinks these like Saul have conspired to disturb thy peaceful spirit. and couldst thou lift up thy reverend head from the tomb wouldst say with the blessed prophet. *Why have ye disquieted me to bring me up?* Honoured servant of God! sorry am I that the smallest blemish should be cast upon thy memory, nor should it have been done by me were not the honour and glory of thy ever adorable Master and Lord concerned therein!

With regard to what Mr. Charles says at the end of the twelve reasons, it is very observable that his conduct for many years contradicted it. For I ask, did he ever go to church for many years, except some very chance time when he has been invited to preach in a church? Did he not, when in London, constantly preach in church hours, in that dissenting chapel in the City Road, or in that other dissenting chapel at West-street? When in Bristol, did he not preach in that dissenting chapel

in the Horse-fair, and at that other dissenting chapel at Kingswood?*

Mr. Wesley's farther thoughts of separation were nearly granting all I wished for, nearly yielding the contest. He calls it a partial separation after mentioning the just causes of such a separation from the works and workers of darkness, "I believe to separate from these miserable creatures who are the scandals of our church and who would be for the honour of our church and as for the glory of God. And this is no way contrary to the profession which I have made for fifty years."

Indeed considering what Mr. Wesley said and done, it was absolutely necessary to make this concession.

This may cast some light upon what is the conference agreeing several times not to separate from the church, namely an avowed separation so as not to admit members into the society who they would leave the church, which is the wish of most dissenters, if not all. But such a separation we have not pleaded for. What I have ever pleaded for, as well as many of my brethren, is liberty of conscience, to have such a service and such a communion as we can join in communion with, allowing the same privilege. When any thing has been proposed, or voted in conference contrary to the right of every human being, I ever gave my vote against it. Therefore wherever the same conference is brought in as not approving of a separation, it is that general avowed separation which will admit no members into the society but who will leave the church; and such a separation was voted against this day. There is a passage taken out of the last journal which are stated, because what is said afterwards in those places should be attended unto.

* See Page 11th.

PAGE 7th. 1786. "I went to Brentford, the society is almost dwindled away. What have we gained by separating from the church?"

ANSWER. Was not the society at Brentford almost dwindled to nothing before they separated, and was not that the cause of so doing? And has it not answered a valuable end? We find in the same journal Mr. Wesley's voice is changed; for he says, 1789. Feb. 11. "I went to Brentford and found the society still alive, and increasing both in strength and number."

The quotations concerning Deptford has the same disingenuousness in it. Mr. Wesley came to Deptford, Jan. 2. and in his strong language says, he had got among a den of lions; that is, they saw the work droop and wished to take more effectual means to revive it; and it seems these lions soon became lambs; for on the fifteenth day of the same month he came thither and found them in peace and love with each other, and he granted them their reasonable request, they have had the service in the church hours, and it is now the best society and congregation in London circuit, except London itself.

1787. Nov. 4. "In London the congregation was as usual large and serious. But there is no increase in the society; so that we have profited nothing by having service in church hours." This is wrong, whether from ignorance or design I know not. The place referred to is Dorking and not London, nor was it on Sunday, Nov. 4. but Monday, Nov. 5. He tells you that on Sunday, Nov. 4. the number of communicants was so great that he was obliged to consecrate thrice; and mark, the sacrament was in church hours, so that it seems it answers the design in London by the great increase of communicants. And even in Dorking, where he was at the Monday, the congregation was large and serious, which was no bad sign, and as to the

increase of the society, Mr. Wesley's stay was so short that he could not be well acquainted with the place, and the time of their having service in the evening was so short that no great change could be expected.

Throughout this journal I have remarked wherever the service has been set up in the evening, Mr. Wesley has confirmed it by having service in those places at those hours if he has been obliged to be at the place on Lord's days, year after year, begun it in one or more places where it never had been at those hours before.

I have now taken notice of all that is material in the above pamphlet; as for the latter part, *Free Thoughts, &c.* I shall leave it to its own fate, that is, scurrility, impudence, and bombast.

It has been observed Mr. Wesley was not a high church man in high church principles, and was strongly attached to them till God taught him better. He retained all the fundamental doctrines of the church to the end of his life; he also loved the liturgy of the church, for the most part, especially the prayer book, but he certainly was under a necessity to act as a dissenter in many respects, or he would have done very little good, he would have been tied to the old foot. But that he acted as a dissenter is clear, and he is obliged tacitly to acknowledge it in several instances. Indeed the canons* require strict obedience from every clergyman to their orders, and that almost every step Mr. Wesley has taken has been in opposition thereunto.

* Let one canon speak for many. Canon 12. We shall affirm, that it is lawful for any sort of minister or persons to make rules, orders, and constitutions, in ecclesiastical without the king's authority, and shall submit to be ruled and governed by them, let him be excommunicated *factis*, and not restored, but only by the archbishop, after repentance and public revocation of his wicked error. We see that Mr. Wesley was liable to a most terrible excommunication, for he made rules without the king's authority.

1st. By preaching in all parts of England, both in the open air and in houses, without license from any bishop or archbishop.

2d. By erecting societies, independent of the bishops, and bringing them under rules and discipline of his own.

3d. By having chapels built, and preaching and administering the Lord's Supper in them without their being consecrated.

4th. By admitting men to preach who were not ordained by a bishop; calling a synod every year, and calling every preacher to an account concerning his conduct and doctrine, and then appointing them their destination the ensuing year; sending them into all parts of the land, yea and into other lands also; a more extensive jurisdiction than any bishop ever assumed, except the bishop of Rome.

5th. By formally ordaining men, not only to preach but also, to administer the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

6th. By constantly preaching and administering the Lord's Supper in those dissenting chapels in Spittle-fields, West-street, and the City-road, when in London.

If all this does not make a man a dissenter, it is hard to tell what does. Nay I will appeal to all the universities in Christendom, and to all the divines and civilians in the land; and if they will not announce Mr. Wesley and all the preachers in connexion with him dissenters, I will promise to preach no more.

Nay, we cannot preach but as dissenters, we are liable to a fine, and the houses in which we preach are liable to be fined as well as our hearers without being licensed, yea and licensed as dissenters; nay, Mr. Wesley himself was liable to this, and so is every clergyman who goes beyond the bound of his jurisdiction. It was but a little before Mr. Wesley's death that he knew all this, and admired the Provi-

dence of God that we have been so favourable with, seeing matters stood thus. That Mr. Wesley was thus a dissenter will be matter of proof to thousands, that he denied himself to be in a dissent, such was his weakness, and laid him under great inconvenience.

IV. I come now to pay some attention to a sermon published in the American magazine for May and June, 1790. What I have principally to say upon that sermon, is contained in a letter which I wrote to Mr. Wesley soon after the sermon was published. It is the only copy which I have preserved of any letter which I ever wrote to that venerable man of God. I wish I had preserved many copies of some scores which I have written during the last twenty years. However, it is necessary to prefix a few hints which may be explanatory of some things which are only hinted at or darkly referred to in the following letter.

Numbers have very ignorantly made a gospel ministry analagous to the Jewish priesthood, hence such among the preachers as have thought it their duty to administer the ordinances of the new testament have been blamed for aspiring to the Jewish priesthood, and have been kindly compared to Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. Hence I observe that the Jewish priesthood has nothing to do with the gospel ministry, but that it had its full and final accomplishment in our great high priest, and that preachers cannot be seeking that which has no place or pretence. It has been asserted that our Lord formed the new testament church in its worship and ordinances, after the model of the old: this is denied in the letter. Some have condemned our preachers for being self-righteous, because they refused to join in communion with notorious and unrepentant sinners, and have objected to them that Isa. lxxv. 5. "Stand by thyself, I am holier than thou." In the letter I observe, we might as

be blamed for refusing improper persons admittance into our love feasts.

Some years ago it was debated in the conference, whether we should not administer the Lord's Supper to such as objected going to church, some few preachers were against it, Mr. Wesley was more moderate, and thought the time was not yet come, and that we should follow the openings of Providence. One thing brought on another, so that some inquired if the preachers had a right to administer the ordinances; I appealed to Mr. Wesley whether he could find any such thing in scripture, or in the whole compass of church history, that men who allowed the necessity of the new testament ordinances, being called to preach the gospel, yea, to give their whole time to the work, and to have no right to administer those ordinances. I do not remember him ever being at so great a loss for an answer. He ingenuously confessed he did not recollect any such thing. But he immediately added, here is a new thing in the earth, God carries on his work by men who do not administer the ordinances. This circumstance is the thing referred to where I say, "It is a new thing, utterly unknown to the apostles, but it is no better for that."

All the high churchmen build much upon their *jus divinum*, or their divine right. This fable, as Mr. Wesley justly calls it, is founded upon the notion of the uninterrupted succession, (down from the apostles to the present bishops) a circumstance which it allowed, must give no small weight in the scale of popery. But whatever plea the papists may have in that imagination, surely it will not become Protestants to make use of it, seeing that when they abjured a popish *jus divinum*, they could only adopt a *jus humanum*, except what they can derive from the oracles of God. The *jus divinum* has been a most terrible engine of persecution, both in the hands of papists, churchmen, and even Pres-

byterians; for it is very remarkable, that a little time the Presbyterians mounted the throne in England, their heads got turned by *justice* that they were determined to adopt it upon this despotic, persecuting principle. When the league and covenant is formed, and in the face of their capital objections against Cromwell, he would not abet them therein. This is a farther proof to me that all national religions have been national tyrannies, even among what are called Christians, whether they be called Catholics, Churchmen, or Presbyterians. And must not the members of a few poor Methodists be itching for the same bloody fruit! Must they set up a standard and summon all the provinces to bow down to it? Let them look at the lines quoted in the 1st of Kings. Let them enjoy their privileges with thanksgiving, without putting a yoke upon their necks. Let them imitate the unbelieving Jews, of whom the Lord said, they tempted God, and limited the power of Israel. Psalm lxxviii. 41. And is not it the duty of men's consciences with positive dogmas, as if they were God, a limiting the Holy One of Israel? saying to the Almighty, hitherto shalt thou go, and no farther; and here shall thy Omnipotence be stayed! Is such a spirit or procedure worthy of poor worms of the earth? I would ask the brethren, how would they like it, suppose they were constrained to leave the church? Would they take it patiently? Would they not murmur at the hardship? But to return from this digression.

Mr. Wesley calls the vain motion of an hereditary succession a fable; he may well say so, for one who has read the history of the papal succession will do the same: For there have been at times three, yea four popes at a time, and each party fighting for them, and the party which prevailed bore away the triple crown till a stronger and more crafty competitor, with a battle-axe in his hand, made him give way. Such is the *justice*

and such is the uninterrupted succession; a bloody fountain which has sent out bloody streams in all directions. This being the case, every man is called to prove his divine right from the Bible; and if so, the man who can prove his divine right to preach the gospel from the bible, will prove his divine right to administer every ordinance in the New Testament. Also he may put on a surplice, a gown, a rochet, or a fool's coat and cap too if he please, provided that he comes honestly by it. Let the preacher have grace, gifts, and fruit of his labour, and such a one will be found an able minister of the New Testament, a workman whom God will honour, and will prove himself as really called of God to be a minister of the gospel of Christ, as Aaron was called of God to be the high priest of Israel of old.

The judicious reader will see in the following letter some things hinted which have been pretty largely treated of before; but his candour will excuse that, as there is a kind of necessity for it. The ensuing letter will be one proof from some hundreds of my undisguised dealings with that venerable servant of the Most High, and may answer the liberal remarks of some who ask "What! can they not let Mr. Wesley be cold in his grave before they throw off the mask and destroy all that he has been doing these fifty years?" I had no mask to throw off, I had no temptation to put one on; I am endeavouring to do in my little way what he has been doing these fifty years, namely calling sinners to repentance, comforting mourners, building up believers, by preaching the gospel, administering Baptism and the Lord's Supper, visiting the sick, &c. &c. Many of my brethren, whose praise is in the churches, mean to do the same.

TO THE REVEREND JOHN WESLEY.

Hull, May 29th, 1790

Rev. and dear sir,

I beg leave to offer you a few plain, free thoughts on your sermon from Heb. v. 4. and as I sincerely

E

reverence you above all men under the sun
 wish to say, or write any thing that would
 you; and if I here use great plainness
 you to read it with patience. You very
 serve, that such as object this text against
 preaching, who are not ordained by a bishop,
 take its meaning.—Indeed they do, for
 kind of reference, or connexion with a
 ministry at all, and I am sorry that you
 for that purpose, in the latter part of your
 almost in the very same sense that the
 oppose do. Indeed, Sir, the whole dispensation
 the levitical priesthood ended when our
 Priest entered the holy place, not made
 after he had purged our sins, and was seated
 the right hand of God. Nor do I find the
 ment authorize us to call any office among
 the name of priesthood. We do not find
 trace of it among the apostles. Nay, to
 to that, the true, real High Priest, did
 from the tribe of Levi, from whence it
 could only be chosen, but from the tribe
 from which tribe no man gave attendance
 altar. Therefore, I utterly deny any
 being among men, except that made mention
 I Peter ii. 9.—of course the preachers of
 that which is abolished and remains no more
 fore, confounded be the man, or men,
 upon them the honour which belongs to
 man Christ Jesus. So far was our Lord
 dwelling the New Testament church after
 old, that he refused to be of the tribe of
 chose the tribe of Judah; nor has he,
 the apostles, retained one name belonging
 offices of the Old Testament service, except
 of minister, a very general term. I cannot
 with you, Sir, in the manner in which you
 guish between pastor and evangelist. You
 pastor over the evangelist: whereas, if there
 any pre-eminence it was, in the evangelist.

to intimate, that the evangelist was only a kind of an assistant to the pastor; indeed, Sir, that cannot be. What was the office of Timothy? was he not an evangelist? so the apostle intimates; *do the work of an evangelist*—and was Timothy no more than an assistant to a pastor? (which I really think was somewhat analagous to what we call a local preacher) nay, Sir, you know Timothy appointed those pastors or elders, therefore his station could not be inferior to theirs. Timothy had it in charge to watch over those pastors, both as to their life and doctrine, and was to be careful who he admitted into that office. Titus was another evangelist, and is said to have appointed those pastors or elders as he passed through the cities; but Titus was not inferior to those pastors which he himself had appointed or ordained. Moreover, if any attention is to be paid to the order in which the apostle has arranged these different offices in the church, the evangelists were superior to pastors, Eph. iv. 10. If the pastors had a right to administer ordinances, surely the evangelists had a right to do the same. With regard to the term, *called of God*, I am fully persuaded that no man ought to take upon him the honour of preaching or administering the ordinances, but he that is called of God; if he does he is an innovator. My call in that matter cost me many a painful, solemn hour, and as I was pressed in spirit, I durst do no other, I was really constrained; the word of God was as a fire shut up in my bones, and it was nothing less than “Woe unto me if I preach not the gospel,” and I am still under the same burden, I cannot get from under it, or I should many times, but I dare not; for I verily believe I should perish if I did. Now, Sir, I always did, and still do, look upon preaching the gospel, to be a work far superior to that of administering the ordinances, the man requires better abilities. We say in the minutes, he must not only have grace, but gifts, yea and fruit too; and, dear Sir, point me

out the place, or the man in the New Testament who had a commission to do the greater work, and no power to do the less. But you say, "God has wrought a new thing in the earth"—appointing men to preach and debarring them the power of administering the ordinances. This is a new thing, utterly unknown to the apostles, but is it any better for that? It is a new thing, it is not the Lord's doing, though it be made manifest in our eyes. As for something like this order in the church of Scotland, it is very true, but those young men are only a kind of preachers upon trial. I need not tell you, Sir, that there are no pluralists in the church of Scotland; every parish has its own minister, and every minister administers the Lord's Supper to his own flock; that they have that ordinance very seldom, but at those times a number of neighbouring ministers step in and assist them, so that there is no occasion for those candidates to exercise in that capacity, but as soon as a minister dies, one of these steps into his place, but that case differs widely from the matter in hand. But now, dear Sir, in what do you go to say, have patience with me.—Surely you say Mr. Wesley is a dissenter from the church of England, I shall say truly. By the church of England every body supposes you to mean the hierarchy as it is by law established, not only its doctrines, but in its government and discipline, containing a part of the legislative power of the civil state, as governed by archbishops, &c. Now, my dear Sir, are not you a dissenter who preach and administer the Lord's Supper in a chapel at London, or the preaching house at Bristol, or Leeds? None of these places are considered, no bishop has any jurisdiction over them, they are churches enough, and empty enough. In London and Bristol, yet you do not attend them, except you are desired to preach in them. **Is not this dissenting? You call a conference**

a year, you admit men into the ministry, so I call preaching the gospel—you appoint men their stations in that work, and call them to an account for their doctrine and conduct; you send them all over the three kingdoms, and into foreign parts, a wider province than the archbishop of Canterbury has, and I heartily wish it may be much wider still; but all this you cannot do as a minister of the church of England; you are not a bishop in that connexion; no bishop has such power; therefore, neither do they, nor can they delegate such power to you; therefore, herein you must act as a dissenter. Nay, Sir, you have formally ordained men to administer the ordinances, and this you must have done as a dissenter it cannot be denied. You say in a former Magazine, Jan. 1786, *For these forty years I have been in doubt concerning the question "What obedience is due to heathenish priests and mitred infidels?"* But I hope, Sir, your doubts are now at an end; for it seems, in the above instances, you have given them up: but if any still remain, suffer me to ask, Do you, Sir really believe that these *heathenish priests and mitred infidels* are called of God, as was Aaron, or St. Paul, or Peter? Do you think St. Peter or Paul would have laid hands on such men? I am glad you give up the fable of the uninterrupted succession; if so, what is all this stir of our "most excellent and apostolical church" for? I think sincerely as you say, viz. that you are a scriptural bishop as much as any man in England or Europe; and I will add, I believe you more so than any man in Europe—But then my dear Sir, who made you a bishop? for you are not made so by man. Was it not the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls? And why has he made you a bishop? that you may in every sense of the word magnify your office. At present, the Methodists are divided into three parties: one is vehement for the church, and is for compelling others to be the same. These are turbulent and heady, and if they had power,

would drive all dissenters out of the world. are ringing the changes a thousand times ears, what you have said and written in tin crying out like Doctor S—l, the dar church is in. A second party are in a sor and think little about the matter, and seem strongest side. A third party are such as have free liberty of conscience, and are qu ing that others should have the same, a would by no means put their brethren fro because they chuse to go to church, an spirits I have seen different from the fo light is from darkness. Now, Sir, which have the greatest right on their side? Wh do you approve? Which is the spirit most ent with the gospel?

I think we are in a very unsettled condit whenever it shall please God to call you appears to me there will be great confus such as desire to draw away disciples after t have, I think, a fair opportunity which m be prevented.

I don't see that text in Isaiah.—Stand by I am holier than thou, has any thing to do lating church discipline. Certainly care sh taken who are admitted to the Lord's Supp out subjecting them who are thus carefu odium, or else why don't we let every body our love feasts? It is not because we are a would do them more harm than good.

Do the Methodists in America thrive a for having the ordinances? Did they ever so well as they do at present? O Sir! m pends upon you in this matter, God has w great work in the earth through your me you may still be the happy means of perpe it. I don't see that giving what I call a t aged make us any more a distinct sect, th we are, or drive us into deserts or herm No, it will prevent that, it would cut off

tion of separation, and lay a foundation for a lasting union. Pardon, dear Sir, the length of this letter, and believe me, with the greatest sincerity, to be your affectionate son in the gospel,

T. TAYLOR.

To what is remarked in the above letter, I might observe Aaron pleaded no lineal succession, he was appointed of God to his work; so is every minister of Christ. He is really moved by the Holy Ghost to take that office and ministry upon him; and man taketh this honour upon himself, but he that is called of God to the office of a minister, as Aaron was to be a priest. But that Aaron's priesthood has nothing to do with the ministry of the gospel, is plain from several circumstances.

1st. The nature of the two offices. Aaron was not called to preach the gospel, nor did he ever do it. The two principal parts of his office were to offer sacrifice and incense; and to sprinkle the blood upon the mercy seat, and thereby make intercession for the people with prayers supplications, and therein was a type of our ever adorable High Priest. But the minister of the gospel is to preach the glad tidings of salvation in the name of his Saviour, to all the human race; to point them to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sins of the world.

To lead them to his open side,

The Sheep for whom the Shepherd dy'd."

He has nothing to do with slaying of animals, or sprinkling of blood; but to set forth the victim already slain, the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel. Even in the ordinance of baptism, he must not forget that precious blood which purgeth the conscience from dead works to serve the living and true God. In the sacred supper, he eats and drinks in remembrance that Christ died for him; and to all who may communicate with him he sets forth the Lord's death until he come.

2d. The different manner in which the high priest, and the gospel minister are inducted into their respective offices, plainly evidence the difference in those offices, and that the one has no reference to the other. In the induction of the high priest into his office, there were several victims to be slain, and their blood to be sprinkled upon him; and likewise the oil of consecration compounded according to divine appointment; and the different garments and other circumstances were minutely and distinctly pointed out, and nothing in the ceremony was to be omitted. See xxviii Exodus throughout.

In the ordaining of the minister of the gospel that pomp is laid aside; nor do I apprehend the laying on of hands essentially necessary there, if it had our Lord would undoubtedly have blessed hands on his apostles. He gave them their commission in great simplicity, and yet with great sublimity. Hear how it runs; *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, all power is given unto you. Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all that whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* His majesty, and yet simplicity becoming the Most High; and also that gospel which is preached to the poor, and which is the life of God unto an endless life. Matt. xxviii. 18.

3d. Every priest was not only to be of a certain tribe, but also of a certain family. No man was to presume to come nigh the altar, but the high priest, as Aaron, for it is often repeated. *And the man that draweth nigh shall be put to death.* The minister of the gospel may be of any family, or country; it makes no matter neither of his country, or kindred, or colour he may be a Jew or Greek, bond or free, provided that the will of the Lord be upon him for his work. Only

observe, that whomsoever our Lord sends forth he qualifies for the work ; he never sends those to preach who cannot preach ; nor does he send ignorant or ungodly men to preach. Such have not his commission.

4th. The Jewish priest was to offer sacrifices nowhere but in Jerusalem ; it was said, to be the place which the Lord chose to put his name there, and thither all the sacrifices were to be brought. Duet. xii. 5, 6, 7. But the minister of Jesus is to go into all the world ; and as far as in his power lies to preach the gospel to every creature. They were to preach repentance and remission of sins among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

5th. The levitical priesthood was but for a limited time, and then finally to cease. But a gospel ministry, and consequently gospel ministers, must abide till the final dissolution of the world ; and their master has promised to be with them *always even unto the end of the world*. A precious declaration indeed. O may I, and my dear fellow-labourers, feel it always accomplished in us, and by us, till we finish our course with triumphant joy. Thus I think it sufficiently appears that a gospel ministry has nothing to do with the levitical priesthood, and therefore that text in the Hebrews is quite foreign to the service it is often pressed into. And even admitting it had any reference to a gospel ministry, I think it would exclude great numbers who, with very great impropriety, object that passage to the itinerant preachers. Let them consider the character of Aaron : he held close fellowship with God, and received a commission from his Maker to go to Pharaoh, king of Egypt, long before he was appointed to the office of High Priest. Exodus iv. 27. Aaron was, in the general tenor of his conduct, holy, harmless, and undefiled ; and hence he is stiled, *the saint of the Lord*. Psalm cvi. 16. But does this suit the condition of thousands who are called, clergy ? Will their conduct bear any

such description in any tolerable qualified the word? Had Aaron been of the class of the great ones, who, in modern language, are stiled nobles and bloods; had he been a racer, a wencher, a dicer, or carder; had he been a tavern-house raker, a frequenter of play-houses, an ignorant of God, and a real despiser of experimental religion, we should never have read of his being called of God to be a high priest, he would not have had the honour of being a type of the High Priest of our salvation.

With regard unto the church that there is much noise about; who vindicate her doctrines from the world; what we do? And this we would do within the walls if they would permit us. On the other side, how many thousands, yea, I might say, millions in England, who do not come to the church in a quarter of a year, but are spending the day either in pleasure or business? I should think these are the dissenters, though they call themselves churchmen. Look at the generation of drunkards, revellers, Sabbath-breakers, and all sorts of unchristian and ungodly practices of all descriptions; yet I dare say, nine in the hundred of them call themselves churchmen. I really think my bible calls me to separate from among them, and to be separated from them, so that I may not be a partaker of their evil.

I would say, to all the Methodists, who have their duty to go to church, beware of a perverting spirit; and beware of every thing which we call a appearance of compulsion; it is strongly intimated that if such had bonds and imprisonments commanded, they would put them in force against such as differ from them. What harm is done? Is your eye evil because God is good? No. Does it grieve you the good which you get at the church? No. Would you, my brethren, would you be willing to be compelled to leave the church? Would you not think it hard? Think then for your brethren, who are so much hindered, their reasons for not going thither. Beside

such cases, violent opposition always defeats its own intention. No one acts freely contrary to the judgment he has formed of a thing; and remember, *where the Spirit of the Lord is there is liberty.*

Let such as are willing to avail themselves of their privileges, and whose cause this pamphlet pleads, be humble and thankful. They have no temptation now to be *carried about with divers and strange doctrines*, seeing an open door is set before them; and as no man can shut it, let them be careful they do not shut it against themselves. Let them use their liberty and not abuse it. Let them consider, that where much is given much is required. It might be well not to wrangle with such as think differently from them; in such cases few people are convinced by argument; the mind is too positive to yield "to reason's glimmering ray," time and patience will discover what words cannot. It may seem unreasonable, that any worm of the earth should desire to have dominion over your faith, and to lord it over your consciences; and it is still more provoking when insult is joined with tyranny, when their objections are delivered in a haughty, surly, dictatorial stile. Nevertheless, remember, that a soft answer turns away wrath; and bear it patiently for a season, and God will in due time give them to see the truth as it is in Jesus.

V. I shall now briefly address myself to my brethren in the ministry, and more especially to my seniors and coevals.

My dear Fellow-labourers,

We see the grateful returns which we receive from many after a long series of labours and difficulties, after leaving every thing which was near unto us, and whatever talents any of us might possess either natural or acquired, either for honourable or profitable departments in life. Numbers of you, as well as myself, have been in mobs and tumults; in hunger and cold; in contempt and scorn;

in weariness and painfulness, not having any dwelling-place; often glad to lay a weary body in any poor cottage that was open to us: and is our recompence from many, who under God call their all on earth to us? and if they had not called of God by our ministry, might still have remained in their original poverty and contempt in the open road to everlasting ruin and misery. I say, what is our reward? Do they esteem us highly in love for our work's sake? Are they requiring that scriptural obedience which the word of God requires? Are they trying to make the stages of a laborious life more easy and comfortable to us? Are they trying to profit by our more pure and advanced labours of love? Ah, no! we must now subject ourselves to their dogmas without scripture or reason; we must do worse than our time in spending the best part of the day in sitting under men who neither preach nor give the gospel! We must sanction unscriptural doctrines, by our tacit approbation, as we do their unholy conversation. We must deny our call to the ministry, renouncing some essential branches of it; we must reject the very privileges of Englishmen; we must suffer many of those we have called together, to be put to very great inconveniencies, both in respect to our time in preaching to them, and also be denied the privilege of either taking the ordinances ourselves, or administering them to such as God has given us as a blessing to our ministry; and if we be unwilling to renounce our call, we must have calumny, lies, and contumacious cast upon us; scurrilous pamphlets must be set out and reprinted; we must be annexed to the name; or coupled with buckle beggars; that is, our predecessors be counted the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things. Think not it strange when you read the epistle to the Corinthians and Galatians. But I ask you who esteem us most, or who are most likely to profit by

ministry? those who look upon you as a set of overbearing intruders, or those who receive you as the chosen and sent of God, and who own you as their fathers in the Lord? The one are willing to make your lives comfortable, and give full sanction to your mission, owning you as the ministers of Christ; the other use every means to depress and mortify you, preferring any ignorant ungodly sinner to you, if he is called a clergyman; and, in short, not allowing you to be ministers at all.— Which of these act most agreeable to the word of God? The one desire to sit under your ministry at the most convenient time, that their hungry souls may be fed with the rich truths of the gospel; the other will prefer the hearing of that which is neither law nor gospel. The one wish to receive the sacred symbols of your Saviour's passion from your hands; the other look upon it as highly presumptuous in you to handle them.

If any of you are not satisfied that it is your duty to administer the ordinances, or think there is no necessity for you to do so, beware of condemning, or even judging, your brethren, who think otherwise. Their doing of it does you no harm, because it takes nothing from you. They preach the same Christ, the same faith, the same hope, the same love, the same plain, unerring way to Heaven.— Many of them have borne the burden and the heat of the day, and have not laboured in vain. God has honoured, and still does honour them; yea, he honours them in the very means which some so warmly oppose: that very circumstance should silence opposition, and ought to make every one careful what they do or say, lest they should be found fighting against God. When John the Baptist sent to our Lord to know if he were the Christ, our Saviour gave no other answer than that of appealing to his works; saying, *Go and tell John the things ye hear and see. The blind receive their sight,*

and the lame walk : the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear ; the dead are raised, and the poor the gospel preached to them ; and blessed is he, soever shall not be offended in me. Matt. xi. 5, apprehend this answer was sufficient both for and those who were sent by him. In like manner he answered the Scribes and Pharisees ; *the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the works that I do bear witness of me.*--John v. 36. A man that was born blind adopted the same mode of reasoning when the Jews objected, that Christ was a sinner. *Whether he be a sinner or no, said he, I know not ; but one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see.*--*Why herein is a marvellous thing, which ye know not whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes.** Saint Paul made use of the same argument to such as began to call in question his authority. *The seal of my apostleship are ye in the Lord.†* The test of true or false prophets is *their fruits ye shall know them.* Is not this a criterion to which we have always appealed to when we are objected to our mission as preachers? to our success in sinners being saved. Has not Mr. Wesley laid much stress upon this when pleading our cause? Look over his journals and appeals carefully : is not this one proof by which we judge of the success of preachers being called to their work? We inquire, Have they grace—gifts? And have they fruit? Now we appeal to matter of fact in the present case. Is there no fruit of preaching in church and house? Have none been awakened and converted to God? I believe we can call forth many witnesses, that none have been converted while we have been administering the Lord's Supper or baptism? We may bring witnesses for the truth of this also. No wonder if God be for us, why should our brethren be against us? It looks a little odd, that we must go the same ground over again, and combat our brethren with the very same weapons with which we have been fighting the world so long.

* John ix. 25, 31.

† 1 Cor. ix. 2.

I have affirmed, that sinners have been convinced and converted by preaching in church hours, and by administering the ordinances; and have we any reason to think that these poor souls would have been convinced and converted, if there had been no service at those seasons? I take it for granted, you are no Calvinists, and therefore don't believe those sinners would have been convinced or converted at those very times, whether they were in the way of duty or no. The good that is done upon earth, it is God that does it; and if God set his seal to his own work, who can say to him, *What dost thou?* Let me entreat you, my brethren not to stand in the way of sinners; beware how you raise prejudice in our way, directly or indirectly; if you don't chuse to join us, don't stand in our way; leave the matter in God's hands, he will maintain his own cause. We do not seek to head any party, but to help on the work of God; to keep those sheep in the fold which we have with much toil and labour sought in the wilderness. For how many thousands have been driven away from us, for want of opening a fold for them? not only driven from us, but I fear driven from God, by first hearing one strange wind of doctrine and then another, and which have proved so many back-ways into the world again. It has often been grief of heart to me, and much heaviness of mind, to see how such have, by that means, in process of time, forsaken the Lord, the fountain of living water, and are now, alas, fast asleep again. When I would have reasoned with some, they have said, you drive us from you; you will not preach to us at those times which are convenient for us to bring our families; nor will you baptize our children; nor will you administer the Lord's Supper to us: and therefore you cannot blame us if we seek out help for ourselves." Consider, this is a sort of reasoning which is not easily answered. Let us attentively consider that con-

science is an awful thing to trifle with, nor we to put any force upon the conscience of another, but rather let us become all things to all men, that we may save some.

And you, my brethren, who deem it your duty to make full proof of your ministry, and to keep and administer the ordinances, as they are delivered us in the oracles of God; I make no doubt you have weighed the matter attentively; you have looked both into scripture and reason; you see the cause is good in which you have embarked. Likewise you have counted the cost, that you should sacrifice the favour of some of your friends, such as are not very conscientious, will not speak perverse things, or catching at every report to render you odious. That is no new thing, it is a very *old plan*, which was from the beginning, and we must not let such matters move us. To me the greater proof of your sincerity, and that you have nothing sinister in your conduct, is not a "base, men-pleasing temper," but that you are determined to act as in the sight of God. You have a number, a large number, of precious souls who are calling upon you for help; they esteem you as servants of God; they pour no contempt upon you, they treat you as the ambassadors of Christ, and are willing to follow you as you follow your master; they pray for you; they strengthen your hands; they encourage your hearts, and sincerely bid you good speed in the name of God, and give all opportunity you wish for to do them all the good which lies in your power. Moreover, God has blessed your undertaking, he sets his seal to your labours, he gives a happy confirmation of your mission, so that you may be encouraged in the blessed work, for nothing that can oppose. Mean-while let us be to those kindly who may not think as we do, as little offence as we can, consisting with vindicating our own conduct. There w

a furious party, which will, if possible, lord it over the conscience of their brethren; but there are others more moderate and calm, unto whom we may be useful, though they cannot altogether think as we do; they will hear us, and receive profit: thus may we become all things to all men, that we may save some. But such as receive the ordinances from your hands put themselves under your care, and are willing to receive advice, will endure your admonitions, or even your well-timed reproofs, and as such are entitled to your special care, and therefore you are more immediately concerned in their welfare; they are your proper charge, and for whom you are more immediately accountable to the Great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls. Moreover, as you minister to them spiritual things, they are quite willing to minister to you carnal things, and really grudge you nothing that is comfortable in this life. They can see you in a decent coat, and your families in easy circumstances, without any ill-natured reflections, deeming your happiness a part of their own. Let us not drive these precious souls, for whom Christ died, back into Egypt again, let us not compel them to hear strange doctrines, such as are repugnant to the truth as it is in Jesus. Our Saviour *bids them beware of false Prophets*, and shall we drive them to hear such? The beloved disciple commands us not to bid God speed to such as bring false doctrine, nor to *receive them into our houses*; and shall we exhort, yea, force the followers of the Lamb to bid God speed to the propagators of error? What a fearful thing *if after they escaped the pollutions of the world thro' the knowledge of the Lord & Saviour Jesus Christ, they should through, our negligence and perverseness, again be entangled and overcome, and their latter end worse than the beginning.* Should we meet these in the way of error and seduction, what can we say to them? Shall we reprove them? Alas!

they may retort it with aggravating keenness,—" You forced us to hear a broad, or way to heaven, and now do you upbraid us took you for our guides, and you should have known the devices of Satan, and why did you expose us? We entreated you to break the way of life to us, but our entreaties were in vain; you shut your doors against us, at the most convenient time for us to hear you; and, instead of giving us plain scripture proof for your conduct, you gave us only the stale repetition, " It was contrary to the *old plan*, and that we must not leave the church, for we would give offence; and seeing you chose men rather than God, let our souls be redeemed by your hands." What think you, my brethren, of such a peal as this being rung in your ears? prevent it! O feed those hungry sheep! be not afraid of the roarings of Bigotry, nor the infidel Epistles sent up and down the land; being assured of God, let us make full proof of our ministry; remember how our commission runs, Go ye into all the world: preach the gospel to every creature, teaching and baptizing in the name of the Father, and the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And I am with you always, even to the end of the world.

I am, my dear brethren, your affectionate friend and fellow-servant, in the vineyard of our Lord Jesus Christ, your
failing Immanuel,

THOMAS TAYLOR

CONSIDERATIONS

ADDRESSED

TO THE METHODIST SOCIETY OF NEWRY.

THE following Considerations, sufficiently explain themselves; they were drawn up for the purpose of giving a plain view of the question, when it was first introduced in this town; and they are inserted here, as they afford the best contradiction that could be given to certain publications, which have been circulated throughout the kingdom, asserting that the leaders of Newry were unanimous against the introduction of the Lord's Supper amongst us.

As much conversation has taken place in this neighbourhood, respecting the administering of the Lord's Supper amongst us, and as the circumstances have, in some instances, been misrepresented, it is judged necessary to submit to you, a plain statement of facts

For many years past, numerous petitions have been presented to Conference, from societies in different parts of Ireland, part of whose members had been formerly dissenters, praying that the sacraments might be administered to them, by their own preachers, as they were prevented, by various reasons, from approaching the Lord's table, in those congregations in which they had been educated.

At the last Conference, in Dublin, this subject was again introduced; and after having undergone full discussion, a resolution was passed, granting the prayer of the petition, but suspending its operation for one year. When this was known in Newry, the leaders proposed to take into consideration the propriety of the measure, and after a considerable time spent in deliberation, it was resolved "that they would petition the ensuing Conference against the administering of the Lord's Supper, by the Methodist preachers of Ireland." This resolution was carried by a very small majority.

Now, this resolution not only declares, that the Methodists of Newry shall not have this ordinance amongst themselves, but that no society in the kingdom, *no matter what their situation may be, nor how long they may have been deprived of it,* shall ever, by the hands of their own preachers, receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Many of our friends, perhaps, may be anxious to know on what grounds this doctrine is supported, or why an attempt

should be made to deprive those of our society of the ordinance, who are prevented by a *principle of conscience* attending the Lord's table, in their former places of worship.

First—It is objected, 'that the administration of the Supper, in our own chapels and by our own preachers, should be a departure from the *original plan* of Methodism; to this we reply—When experimental religion revived in the British dominions, by the instrumentality of those who afterwards nick-named Methodists, there was *no original plan*,* but every circumstance in its economy, according to the gracious order of Providence. Thus the objections rested in the mind of Mr. Wesley, against the employment of lay-preachers; and it was not until he proved it to be of God, that he submitted to it †

Class-meeting, in like manner, that has been of so great and valuable advantage to Methodism, was not the result of a fixed plan, but, on the contrary, arose, just as the employment of lay-preachers, from the openings of the Quarterly Meetings, District Meetings, and even the Conference itself, were of this nature. Here then was no original plan; but the providence of God led his servants to such measures, occasionally, as appeared to them to be of general advantage.

Second—But it is objected further, "Is it not a departure from the design of Methodism?" Do we not therefore separate from the "church?" We answer—When the

* It has often been suggested by Mr. Wesley's opponents, that the plan of *Methodism* was the result of a long premeditated design: but on a careful examination into the various circumstances of his life, no such design appears. He positively asserts the contrary; and every circumstance collected from his private papers, confirms the truth of his assertion.... WESLEY'S LIFE, vol. ii. p. 99.

† In the first attempts of a layman to preach, it is related that his mother (Mrs. Susanna Wesley) heard his discourse; at which time John Wesley was at this time absent from London; she, the thing being quite new, and appearing extraordinary, immediately acquainted with it. He hastened up to her, with a full determination to put a stop to so glaring a novelty. He conversed with his mother on the subject, and she rebuked her intention. She said, "I charge you before God to take care what you do, for that man is as much called to preach the gospel as ever you were." This kept him from an abandonment of his purpose; and it being found upon inquiry that good was done to the people, the practice was suffered to continue.—WESLEY'S LIFE, vol. i. p. 53.

God revived so wonderfully, in the period already alluded to, Mr. Wesley did not form those who were brought to the knowledge of God by his ministry, into a separate church; but he formed a society, in which persons of various denominations and of different opinions, might meet together for the purpose of Christian communion. In process of time, however, some clergymen, especially in Scotland, declared to those of their hearers who had entered the Methodist Society, that if they did not immediately separate from their new friends, they could not be admitted to the Lord's table. Here is plain matter of fact. What was Mr. Wesley to do? Did he say to those persons—"Go to church—there you may have this ordinance." No; he respected *conscience*, and therefore he appointed preachers to administer the Lord's Supper to those societies, from that period forward.*

This is a case exactly in point. The persons who ask this ordinance, were never, in general, members of "the church," and therefore could not separate from it; and in the present instance, they have petitioned Conference, because the clergymen of the congregations with whom they formerly were united, are of the Socinian or Arian principles, or shamefully corrupt in their morals.

The question, then, brethren, simply comes to this.—Have we any right to say to the societies of Sligo, Armagh, Belfast, or elsewhere—you shall not have this ordinance? We will use our influence to prevent it—we will petition Conference that you shall remain as heretofore. Should we not rather say, we know not the peculiar circumstances of our brethren in those circuits—we will not, therefore, interfere in a matter in which their *own consciences* alone are concerned.†

Third—It is further urged, that the introduction of this

* The names of the preachers first appointed to this work, were John Pawson, Thomas Hauby and Joseph Taylor.— See Miles's History, page 186.

† Those persons who are now so adverse to any deviation from *original* Methodism, either in doctrine or *discipline*, should reflect, that heretofore they have given their most strenuous exertions to effect, and indeed have effected very important changes in the *discipline* of the Methodist societies. These brethren are well persuaded that the entire of the original discipline of Methodism, "as established by our late venerable founder" is changed. Thus the power which originally rested in the assistant, is now transferred to a leader's meeting; nay, that not only have they robbed the superintendent of his power, but they are encroaching upon the power of the Conference, and will not consent to leave in the hands of that

ordinance will injure the work of religion among us. We do not wish to treat with levity any argument by those persons who are hostile to this measure, scarcely think the man serious, who would grant this as a substantial reason why the sacraments should not be administered in our chapels, by our own preachers. Can obedience to the command of CHRIST injure CHRIST? If we are so apprehensive of danger here, let us not ask, what has saved England, Scotland, the West Indies, and America, where the Methodists have long enjoyed this ordinance amongst them? The injury feared is all imaginary, for we have the examples before us of the positive good that may be expected from it—and the same reasons that rendered it so beneficial in England, exist in a ten-fold degree in Ireland. The authority of Dr. Adam Clarke, (no mean authority), that the advantages in England have been unparalleled, could it be otherwise? If a man lives in the omission of this duty, is he not injured thereby? And what is the state of those who are living for years in the omission of this duty, which Christ himself has established in his church, and commanded to be observed to the end of the world. If we find a remedy for the evil, we must not assume a posture of indifference. "Go to church." We have no authority to dictate of this kind, but should give to our brethren the opportunity in which we exercise ourselves.

These are some of the avowed objections to the observance of the Lord's Supper in our Societies.—Let every man weigh them well, and satisfy his own mind. These are of sufficient weight to deprive a great number of our brethren throughout Ireland, of the blessings annexed to the observance of this duty. But though these are the avowed objections, there are others which are not publicly mentioned. One of these private reasons is, an objection to lay-administering. If any man read Mr. Wesley's letter to archdeacon Trenchard, he will be soon convinced who the true ministers are, and who, consequently, have a right to administer the sacraments. Mr. Wesley says,

"It is not the assembly even the appointment of their own ministers, which cannot be disapproved. Yet these are the reasons, which, if they were admitted, it would be highly inexpedient and injurious to the discipline of original Methodism."

• At the time this letter was written, the same objections were made to the lawfulness and expediency of lay-administering, that are now offered against lay-administering, and the same reasons, which are here adverted to, had a good effect in silencing the objections.