

MINUTES  
OF  
SEVERAL CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN

THE REV. MR. WESLEY AND OTHERS;

FROM THE YEAR 1744, TO THE YEAR 1789.\*

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It is desired, that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God; that every person speak freely whatever is in his heart.

Q. 1. How may we best improve the time of this Conference?

A. (1.) While we are conversing, let us have an especial care to set God always before us.

(2.) In the intermediate hours, let us redeem all the time we can for private exercises.

(3.) Therein let us give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing on this our labour.

Q. 2. Have our Conferences been as useful as they might have been?

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

Q. 3. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?

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

\* This tract, which is usually denominated, "The Large Minutes," contains the plan of discipline as practised in the Methodist Connexion during the life of Mr. Wesley. As its title intimates, it underwent several alterations and enlargements from the year 1744 to 1789, when the last revision took place. It is here reprinted from a copy which bears the date of 1791,—the year in which Mr. Wesley died,—collated with the edition of 1789.—EDIT.

Q. 4. What was the rise of Methodism, so called ?

A. In 1729, two young men, reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw holiness comes by faith. They saw likewise, that men are justified before they are sanctified ; but still holiness was their point. God then thrust them out, utterly against their will, to raise a holy people. When Satan could no otherwise hinder this, he threw Calvinism in the way ; and then Antinomianism, which strikes directly at the root of all holiness.

Q. 5. Is it advisable for us to preach in as many places as we can, without forming any societies ?

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

Q. 6. Where should we endeavour to preach most ?

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

Q. 7. Is field-preaching unlawful ?

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

Q. 8. Have we not used it too sparingly ?

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

The greatest hinderance to this you are to expect from rich, or cowardly, or lazy Methodists. But regard them not, neither Stewards, Leaders, nor people. Whenever the weather will permit, go out in God's name into the most public places, and call all to repent and believe the gospel ; every Sunday, in particular ; especially were there are old societies, lest they settle upon their lees. The Stewards will frequently oppose this, lest they lose their usual collection. But this is not a sufficient reason against it. Shall we barter souls for money ?

Q. 9. Ought we not diligently to observe in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly ?

A. We ought; and at that time to send more labourers than usual into that part of the harvest.

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

Q. 10. How often shall we permit strangers to be present at the meeting of the society?

A. At every other meeting of the society in every place let no stranger be admitted. At other times, they may; but the same person not above twice or thrice. In order to this, see that all in every place show their tickets before they come in. If the Stewards and Leaders are not exact herein, employ others that have more resolution.

Q. 11. How may the Leaders of classes be made more useful?

A. (1.) Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his method of meeting a class. Let this be done with all possible exactness at the next quarterly visitation. And in order to this, allow sufficient time for the visiting of each society.

(2.) Let each Leader carefully inquire how every soul in his class prospers; not only how each person observes the outward Rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God.

(3.) Let the Leaders converse with the Assistant frequently and freely.

Q. 12. Can anything farther be done, in order to make the meetings of the classes lively and profitable?

A. (1.) Change improper Leaders.

(2.) Let the Leaders frequently meet each other's classes.

(3.) Let us observe which Leaders are the most useful; and let these meet the other classes as often as possible.

(4.) See that all the Leaders be not only men of sound judgment, but men truly devoted to God.

Q. 13. How can we farther assist those under our care?

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

(2.) By instructing them at their own houses. What unspeakable need is there of this! The world say, "The

Methodists are no better than other people." This is not true. But it is nearer the truth than we are willing to believe.

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

I can but just touch on a few generals. How little faith is there among us! How little communion with God! How little living in heaven, walking in eternity, deadness to every creature! How much love of the world; desire of pleasure, of ease, of getting money! How little brotherly love! What continual judging one another! What gossiping, evil-speaking, tale-bearing! What want of moral honesty! To instance only in one or two particulars: Who does as he would be done by, in buying and selling, particularly in selling horses! Write him a knave that does not. And the Methodist knave is the worst of all knaves.

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

And the Methodists in general will be little the better, till we take quite another course with them. For what avails public preaching alone, though we could preach like angels? We must, yea, every travelling Preacher must, instruct them from house to house. Till this is done, and that in good earnest, the Methodists will be little better than other people. Our religion is not deep, universal, uniform; but superficial, partial, uneven. It will be so, till we spend half as much time in this visiting, as we now do in talking uselessly.

Can we find a better method of doing this than Mr. Baxter's? If not, let us adopt it without delay. His whole tract, entitled *Gildas Salvianus*, is well worth a careful perusal. A short extract from it I will subjoin. Speaking of this visiting from house to house, he says:—

"We shall find many hinderances, both in ourselves, and in the people.

"1. In ourselves there is much dulness and laziness; so that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the work.

"2. We have a base, man-pleasing temper; so that we let men perish, rather than lose their love. We let them go quietly to hell, lest we should anger them.

"3. Some of us have also a foolish bashfulness. We know not how to begin, and blush to contradict the devil.

“4. But the greatest hinderance is, weakness of faith. Our whole motion is weak, because the spring of it is weak.

“5. Lastly, we are unskilful in the work. How few know how to deal with men, so as to get within them, and suit all our discourse to their several conditions and tempers; to choose the fittest subjects, and follow them with a holy mixture of seriousness, and terror, and love, and meekness!” (P. 351.)

And we have many difficulties to grapple with in our people.

1. Too many of them will be unwilling to be taught, till we conquer their perverseness by the force of reason and the power of love.

2. And many are so dull that they will shun being taught for fear of showing their dulness. And indeed you will find it extremely hard to make them understand the very plainest points.

3. And it is still harder to fix things on their hearts, without which all our labour is lost. If you have not, therefore, great seriousness and fervency, what good can you expect? And, after all, it is grace alone that must do the work.

4. And when we have made some impressions on their hearts, if we look not after them, they will soon die away.

But as great as this labour of private instruction is, it is absolutely necessary. For, after all our preaching, many of our people are almost as ignorant as if they had never heard the gospel. I speak as plain as I can, yet I frequently meet with those who have been my hearers many years, who know not whether Christ be God or man. And how few are there that know the nature of repentance, faith, and holiness! Most of them have a sort of confidence that God will save them, while the world has their hearts. I have found by experience, that one of these has learned more from one hour's close discourse, than from ten years' public preaching.

And undoubtedly this private application is implied in those solemn words of the Apostle: “I charge thee, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and dead at his appearing, preach the word, be instant in season, out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering.”

O brethren, if we could but set this work on foot in all our societies, and prosecute it zealously, what glory would redound to God! If the common ignorance were banished, and every shop and every house busied in speaking of the word and works

of God ; surely God would dwell in our habitations, and make us his delight.

And this is absolutely necessary to the welfare of our people, many of whom neither believe nor repent to this day. Look round and see how many of them are still in apparent danger of damnation. And how can you walk and talk and be merry with such people, when you know their case? Methinks, when you look them in the face, you should break forth into tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon Hazeel; and then set on them with the most vehement and importunate exhortations. O, for God's sake, and for the sake of poor souls, bestir yourselves, and spare no pains that may conduce to their salvation!

What cause have we to bleed before the Lord this day, that we have so long neglected this good work! If we had but set upon it sooner, how many more might have been brought to Christ! And how much holier and happier might we have made our societies before now! And why might we not have done it sooner? There were many hinderances; and so there always will be. But the greatest hinderance was in ourselves, in our littleness of faith and love.

But it is objected, (1.) "This will take up so much time, that we shall not have time to follow our studies."

I answer, (1.) Gaining knowledge is a good thing; but saving souls is a better. (2.) By this very thing you will gain the most excellent knowledge, that of God and eternity. (3.) You will have time for gaining other knowledge too, if you spend all your mornings therein. Only sleep not more than you need; and never be idle, or triflingly employed. But, (4.) If you can do but one, let your studies alone. I would throw by all the libraries in the world, rather than be guilty of the loss of one soul.

I allow, in some of the country circuits, where you have only a day to spend in each place, you have not time for this excellent work. But you have, wherever you spend several days together in one town.

It is objected, (2.) "The people will not submit to it." If some will not, others will. And the success with them will repay all your labour. O let us herein follow the example of St. Paul!

(1.) For our general business, "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind." (2.) Our special work, "Take heed to yourselves, and to all the flock." (3.) Our doctrine, "Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ." (4.) The

place, "I have taught you publicly, and from house to house." The object and manner of teaching: "I ceased not to warn every one, night and day, with tears." (5.) His innocence and self-denial herein: "I have coveted no man's silver or gold." (6.) His patience: "Neither count I my life dear unto myself." And among all our motives, let these be ever before our eyes: (1.) "The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood." (2.) "Grievous wolves shall enter in; yea, of yourselves shall men arise, speaking perverse things." Write this upon your hearts, and it will do you more good than twenty years' study.

Let every Preacher, having a catalogue of those in each society, go to each house. Deal gently with them, that the report of it may move others to desire your coming. Give the children the "Instructions for Children," and encourage them to get them by heart. Indeed, you will find it no easy matter to teach the ignorant the principles of religion. So true is the remark of Archbishop Usher: "Great scholars may think this work beneath them. But they should consider, the laying the foundation skilfully, as it is of the greatest importance, so it is the masterpiece of the wisest builder. And let the wisest of us all try, whenever we please, we shall find, that to lay this ground-work rightly, to make the ignorant understand the grounds of religion, will put us to the trial of all our skill."

Perhaps in doing this it may be well, (1.) After a few loving words spoken to all in the house, to take each person singly into another room, where you may deal closely with him, about his sin, and misery, and duty. Set these home, or you lose all your labour. (At least, let none be present but those who are familiar with each other.)

(2.) Hear what the children have learned by heart.

(3.) Choose some of the weightiest points, and try if they understand them. As, "Do you believe you have sin in you? What does sin deserve? What remedy has God provided for guilty, helpless sinners?"

(4.) Often with the question suggest the answer. As, "What is repentance? Sorrow for sin, or a conviction that we are guilty, helpless sinners." "What is faith? A divine conviction of things not seen."

(5.) Where you perceive they do not understand the stress of your question, lead them into it by other questions. For

instance, you ask, "How do you think your sins will be pardoned?" They answer, "By repenting and amending my life." You ask farther, "But will your amendment make satisfaction for your past sins?" They will answer, "I hope so, or I know not what will." One would think, these had no knowledge of Christ at all. And some have not. But others have; and give such answers, only because they do not understand the scope of the question. Ask them farther, "Can you be saved without the death of Christ?" They immediately say, "No." And if you ask, "What has he suffered for you?" they will say, "He shed his blood for us." But many cannot express even what they have some conception of; no, not even when expressions are put into their mouths. With these you are to deal exceeding tenderly, lest they be discouraged.

(6.) If you perceive them troubled, that they cannot answer, step in yourself, and take the burden off them; answering the question yourself. And do it thoroughly and plainly, making a full explication of the whole business to them.

(7.) When you have tried their knowledge, proceed to instruct them, according to their several capacities. If a man understand the fundamentals, speak what you perceive he most needs, either explaining farther some doctrines, or some duty, or showing him the necessity of something which he neglects. If he still understands not, go over it again till he does.

(8.) Next inquire into his state, whether convinced or unconvinced, converted or unconverted. Tell him, if need be, what conversion is; and then renew and enforce the inquiry.

(9.) If unconverted, labour with all your power to bring his heart to a sense of his condition. Set this home with a more earnest voice than you spoke before. Get to the heart, or you do nothing.

(10.) Conclude all with a strong exhortation, which should enforce, (1.) The duty of the heart, in order to receive Christ. (2.) The avoiding former sins, and constantly using the outward means. And be sure, if you can, to get their promise, to forsake sin, change their company, and use the means. And do this solemnly, reminding them of the presence of God, who hears their promises, and expects the performance.

(11.) Before you leave them, engage the head of each family to call all his family together every Sunday before they go to bed, and hear what they can repeat, and so continue, till they



have learned the "Instructions" perfectly; and afterwards let him take care that they do not forget what they have learned.

Do this in earnest, and you will soon find what a work you take in hand, in undertaking to be a Travelling Preacher!

Q. 14. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating into the society?

A. (1.) Give tickets to none till they are recommended by a Leader, with whom they have met at least two months on trial.

(2.) Give notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four times in a class.

(3.) Give them the Rules the first time they meet. See that this be never neglected.

Q. 15. When shall we admit new members?

A. In large towns, admit them into the Bands at the quarterly love-feast following the visitation: Into the society, on the Sunday following the visitation. Then also read the names of them that are excluded.

Q. 16. Should we insist on the Band rules, particularly with regard to dress?

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

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

Observe! You give none a Band-ticket before he meets, but after he has met.

Q. 17. Have those in Band left off snuff and drams?

A. No. Many are still enslaved to one or the other. In order to redress this, (1.) Let no Preacher touch either on any account. (2.) Strongly dissuade our people from them. (3.) Answer their pretences, particularly curing the colic.

Q. 18. Do we observe any evil which has lately prevailed among our societies?

A. Many of our members have married with unbelievers, yea, with unawakened persons. This has had fatal effects. They had either a cross for life, or turned back to perdition.

Q. 19. What can be done to put a stop to this?

A. (1.) Let every Preacher publicly enforce the Apostle's caution, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers." (2.) Let him openly declare, whoever does this will be expelled the society. (3.) When any such is expelled, let a suitable exhortation be subjoined. And, (4.) Let all be exhorted to take no step in so weighty a matter without advising with the most serious of their brethren.

Q. 20. Ought any woman to marry without the consent of her parents?

A. In general she ought not. Yet there may be an exception. For if, (1.) A woman be under a necessity of marrying; if, (2.) Her parents absolutely refuse to let her marry any Christian; then she may, nay, ought to, marry without their consent. Yet, even then, a Methodist Preacher ought not to marry her.

Q. 21. Do not Sabbath-breaking, dram-drinking, evil-speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, expensiveness or gaiety of apparel, and contracting debts without due care to discharge them, still prevail in several places? How may these evils be remedied?

A. (1.) Let us preach expressly on each of these heads. (2.) Read in every society the "Sermon on Evil-Speaking. (3.) Let the Leaders closely examine and exhort every person to put away the accursed thing. (4.) Let the Preacher warn every society, that none who is guilty herein can remain with us. (5.) Extirpate smuggling, buying or selling uncustomed goods, out of every society. Let none remain with us, who will not totally abstain from every kind and degree of it. Speak tenderly, but earnestly, and frequently of it, in every society near the coasts; and read to them, and diligently disperse among them, the "Word to a Smuggler." (6.) Extirpate bribery, receiving any thing, directly or indirectly, for voting in any election. Show no respect of persons herein, but expel all that touch the accursed thing. Largely show, both in public and private, the wickedness of thus selling our country. And every where read the "Word to a Freeholder," and disperse it with both hands.

Q. 22. What shall we do to prevent scandal, when any of our members become bankrupt?

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

Q. 23. What is the office of a Christian Minister?

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

Q. 24. In what view may we and our Helpers be considered?

A. Perhaps as extraordinary messengers, (that is, out of the ordinary way,) designed, (1.) To provoke the regular Ministers to jealousy. (2.) To supply their lack of service toward those who are perishing for want of knowledge. But how hard is it to abide here! Who does not wish to be a little higher? suppose, to be ordained!

Q. 25. What is the office of a Helper?

A. In the absence of a Minister, to feed and guide the flock; in particular,

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

(2.) To meet the society and the Bands weekly.

(3.) To meet the Leaders weekly.

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

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

Q. 26. What are the rules of a Helper?

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

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

(3.) Converse sparingly and cautiously with women; particularly, with young women.

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

(5.) Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every-

*The following words (nowadays omitted!) were added ⊕ to this Rule: "Read steadily the most useful books and that for six hours out of the twenty-four at least." (A. W. Harrison)*

thing. You know the Judge is always supposed to be on the prisoner's side.

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

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

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

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

(10.) Be punctual. Do everything exactly at the time. And in general, do not mend our Rules, but keep them ; not for wrath, but for conscience' sake.

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

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

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

Q. 27. What power is this which you exercise over both the Preachers and the societies ?

A. Count Zinzendorf loved to keep all things close : I love to do all things openly. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

(1.) In November, 1738, two or three persons who desired “to flee from the wrath to come,” and then a few more, came to me in London, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, “If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can.” More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The case was afterwards the same at Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle, and many other parts of England, Scotland, and Ireland. It may be observed, the desire was on their part, not mine. My desire was, to live and die in retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God.

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

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

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

(3.) After a time a young man, named Thomas Maxfield, came and desired to help me as a son in the gospel. Soon after came a second, Thomas Richards; and then a third, Thomas Westell. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct. Observe: These likewise desired me, not I them. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my power, to appoint each of these

when, and where, and how to labour; that is, while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased; as I had also, to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same when the number of Preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint when, and where, and how each should help me; and to tell any, (if I saw cause,) "I do not desire your help any longer." On these terms, and no other, we joined at first: On these we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true, my "reward is with the Lord:" But at present I have nothing from it but trouble and care; and often a burden I scarce know how to bear.

(4.) In 1744 I wrote to several Clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the gospel, desiring them to meet me in London, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increased, so that it was not convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and they only met me at London, or elsewhere; till at length I gave a general permission, which I afterwards saw cause to retract.

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

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

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

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

(7.) But some of our Helpers say, "This is shackling free-born Englishmen;" and demand a free Conference, that is, a meeting of all the Preachers, wherein all things shall be determined by most votes. I answer, It is possible, after my death, something of this kind may take place; but not while I live. To me the Preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to serve me as sons in the gospel; but they are not thus engaged to any man or number of men besides. To me the people in general will submit; but they will not thus submit to any other.

It is nonsense, then, to call my using this power, "shackling free-born Englishmen." None needs to submit to it unless he will; so that there is no shackling in the case. Every Preacher and every member may leave me when he pleases. But while he chooses to stay, it is on the same terms that he joined me at first.

"But this is making yourself a Pope." This carries no face of truth. The Pope affirms that every Christian must do all he bids, and believe all he says, under pain of damnation. I never affirmed anything that bears any the most distant resemblance to this. All I affirm is, the Preachers who choose to labour with me, choose to serve me as sons in the gospel. And the people who choose to be under my care, choose to be so on the same terms they were at first.

Therefore all talk of this kind is highly injurious to me, who bear the burden merely for your sake. And it is exceeding mischievous to the people, tending to confound their understanding, and to fill their hearts with evil surmisings and unkind tempers toward me; to whom they really owe more, for taking all this load upon me, for exercising this very power, for shackling myself in this manner, than for all my preaching put together: Because preaching twice or thrice a day is no burden to me at all; but the care of all the Preachers and all the people is a burden indeed!

Q. 28. What reason can be assigned why so many of our Preachers contract nervous disorders?

A. The chief reason, on Dr. Cadogan's principles, is either indolence or intemperance. (1.) Indolence. Several of them use too little exercise, far less than when they wrought at their

trade. And this will naturally pave the way for many, especially nervous, disorders. (2.) Intemperance,—though not in the vulgar sense. They take more food than they did when they laboured more: And let any man of reflection judge how long this will consist with health. Or they use more sleep than when they laboured more: And this alone will destroy the firmness of the nerves. If, then, our Preachers would avoid nervous disorders, let them, (1.) Take as little meat, drink, and sleep as nature will bear; and, (2.) Use full as much exercise daily as they did before they were Preachers.

Q. 29. What general method of employing our time would you advise us to?

A. We advise you, (1.) As often as possible to rise at four. (2.) From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read, partly the Scripture with the Notes, partly the closely practical parts of what we have published. (3.) From six in the morning till twelve, (allowing an hour for breakfast,) to read in order with much prayer, first, "The Christian Library," and the other books which we have published in prose and verse, and then those which we recommended in our Rules of Kingswood School.

Q. 30. Should our Helpers follow trades?

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

Q. 31. Why is it that the people under our care are no better?

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

Q. 32. But why are we not more knowing?

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

I fear there is altogether a fault in this matter, and that few of us are clear. Which of you spends as many hours a day in God's work as you did formerly in man's work? We talk,



—or read history, or what comes next to hand. We must, absolutely must, cure this evil, or betray the cause of God.

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

“But I read only the Bible.” Then you ought to teach others to read only the Bible, and, by parity of reason, to hear only the Bible: But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said George Bell. And what is the fruit? Why, now he neither reads the Bible, nor anything else. This is rank enthusiasm. If you need no book but the Bible, you are got above St. Paul. He wanted others too. “Bring the books,” says he, “but especially the parchments,” those wrote on parchment. “But I have no taste for reading.” Contract a taste for it by use, or return to your trade.

“But I have no books.” I will give each of you, as fast as you will read them, books to the value of five pounds. And I desire the Assistants would take care that all the large societies provide our Works, or at least the Notes, for the use of the Preachers.

(2.) In the afternoon follow Mr. Baxter’s plan. Then you will have no time to spare: You will have work enough for all your time. Then, likewise, no Preacher will stay with us who is as salt that has lost its savour. For to such this employment would be mere drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the knowledge you have, or can procure.

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

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

Q. 33. In what particular method should we instruct them?

A. You may, as you have time, read, explain, enforce, (1.) “The Rules of the Society.” (2.) “Instructions for Children.” (3.) The fourth volume of “Sermons.” And, (4.) Philip Henry’s “Method of Family Prayer.”

We must needs do this, were it only to avoid idleness. Do we not loiter away many hours in every week? Each try himself: No idleness can consist with growth in grace. Nay,

without exactness in redeeming time, you cannot retain the grace you received in justification.

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

(1.) Where there are ten children in a society, meet them at least an hour every week.

(2.) Talk with them every time you see any at home.

(3.) Pray in earnest for them.

(4.) Diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all parents at their own houses.

(5.) Preach expressly on education, particularly at Midsummer, when you speak of Kingswood. "But I have no gift for this." Gift or no gift, you are to do it; else you are not called to be a Methodist Preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the gift, and use the means for it. Particularly, study the "Instructions" and "Lessons for Children."

Q. 34. Why are not we more holy? Why do not we live in eternity; walk with God all the day long? Why are we not all devoted to God; breathing the whole spirit of Missionaries?

A. Chiefly because we are enthusiasts; looking for the end, without using the means. To touch only upon two or three instances: Who of you rises at four in summer; or even at five, when he does not preach? Do you recommend to all our societies the five o'clock hour for private prayer? Do you observe it, or any other fixed time? Do not you find by experience, that any time is no time? Do you know the obligation and the benefit of fasting? How often do you practise it? The neglect of this alone is sufficient to account for our feebleness and faintness of spirit. We are continually grieving the Holy Spirit of God by the habitual neglect of a plain duty! Let us amend from this hour.

Q. 35. But how can I fast, since it hurts my health?

A. There are several degrees of fasting which cannot hurt your health. I will instance in one: Let you and I every Friday (beginning on the next) avow this duty throughout the nation, by touching no tea, coffee, or chocolate in the morning but (if we want it) half a pint of milk or water-gruel. Let us dine on potatoes, and (if we need it) eat three or four ounces of flesh

in the evening. At other times let us eat no flesh-suppers : These exceedingly tend to breed nervous disorders.

Q. 36. What is the best general method of preaching ?

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

Q. 37. Are there any smaller advices relative to preaching, which might be of use to us ?

A. Perhaps these : (1.) Be sure never to disappoint a congregation, unless in case of life or death.

(2.) Begin and end precisely at the time appointed.

(3.) Let your whole deportment before the congregation be serious, weighty, and solemn.

(4.) Always suit your subject to your audience.

(5.) Choose the plainest texts you can.

(6.) Take care not to ramble ; but keep to your text, and make out what you take in hand.

(7.) Be sparing in allegorizing or spiritualizing.

(8.) Take care of anything awkward or affected, either in your gesture, phrase, or pronunciation.

— (9.) Sing no hymns of your own composing.

(10.) Print nothing without my approbation.

(11.) Do not usually pray above eight or ten minutes (at most) without intermission.

(12.) Frequently read and enlarge upon a portion of the Notes. And let young Preachers often exhort, without taking a text.

(13.) In repeating the Lord's Prayer, remember to say "hal-  
lowed," not *hollowed* ; "trespass against us ;" "amen."

(14.) Repeat this prayer aloud after the Minister, as often as he repeats it.

(15.) Repeat after him aloud every confession, and both the doxologies in the Communion-Service.

(16.) Always kneel during public prayer.

(17.) Everywhere avail yourself of the great festivals, by preaching on the occasion, and singing the hymns, which you should take care to have in readiness.

(18.) Avoid quaint words, however in fashion, as *object*, *originate*, *very*, *high*, &c.

(19.) Avoid the fashionable impropriety of leaving out the *u* in many words, as honor, vigor, &c. This is mere childish affectation.

(20.) Beware of clownishness, either in speech or dress. Wear no slouched hat.

(21.) Be merciful to your beast. Not only ride moderately, but see with your own eyes that your horse be rubbed, fed, and bedded.

Q. 38. Have not some of us been led off from practical preaching by what was called preaching Christ?

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

Q. 39. How shall we guard against formality in public worship; particularly in singing?

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

Is not this formality creeping in already, by those complex tunes, which it is scarcely possible to sing with devotion? Such is, "Praise the Lord, ye blessed ones:" Such the long quavering hallelujah annexed to the morning-song tune, which I defy any man living to sing devoutly. The repeating the same words so often, (but especially while another repeats different words, the horrid abuse which runs through the modern church-music,) as it shocks all common sense, so it necessarily brings in dead formality, and has no more of religion in it than a Lancashire hornpipe. Besides, it is a flat contradiction to our Lord's command, "Use not vain repetitions." For what is a vain repetition, if this is not? What end of devotion does it serve? Sing no anthems.

(7.) Do not suffer the people to sing too slow. This naturally tends to formality, and is brought in by them who have either very strong or very weak voices. (8.) In every large society let them learn to sing; and let them always learn our own tunes first. (9.) Let the women constantly sing their parts alone. Let no man sing with them, unless he understands the notes, and sings the bass, as it is pricked down in

the book. (10.) Introduce no new tunes till they are perfect in the old. (11.) Let no organ be placed anywhere, till proposed in the Conference. (12.) Recommend our tune-book everywhere; and if you cannot sing yourself, choose a person or two in each place to pitch the tune for you. (13.) Exhort every one in the congregation to sing, not one in ten only. (14.) If a Preacher be present, let no singer give out the words. (15.) When they would teach a tune to the congregation, they must sing only the tenor.

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

Q. 40. Who is the Assistant?

A. That Preacher in each Circuit who is appointed, from time to time, to take charge of the societies and the other Preachers therein.

Q. 41. How should an Assistant be qualified for his charge?

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

Q. 42. What is the business of an Assistant?

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

Q. 43. Has the office of an Assistant been well executed?

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

Q. 44. Are there any other advices which you would give the Assistants?

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

Is there not a cause? Are we not unawares, by little and little, sliding into a separation from the Church? O use every means to prevent this! (1.) Exhort all our people to keep close to the Church and sacrament. (2.) Warn them all against

nicensess in hearing,—a prevailing evil. (3.) Warn them also against despising the Prayers of the Church. (4.) Against calling our society, “the Church.” (5.) Against calling our Preachers, “Ministers;” our Houses, “Meeting-houses:” Call them plain preaching-houses, or chapels. (6.) Do not license them as Dissenters. The proper paper to be sent in at the Assizes, Sessions, or Bishop’s Court is this: “A. B. has set apart his house in C. for public worship, of which he desires a certificate.” N.B. The Justice does not license the house, but the Act of Parliament. (7.) Do not license yourself till you are constrained; and then, not as a Dissenter, but a Methodist. It is time enough when you are prosecuted to take the oaths. And by so doing you are licensed.

Q. 45. But are we not Dissenters?

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

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

But some may say, “Our own service is public worship.” Yes; but not such as supersedes the Church Service; it presupposes public prayer, like the sermons at the University. If it were designed to be instead of the Church Service, it

would be essentially defective ; for it seldom has the four grand parts of public prayer, deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving.

If the people put ours in the room of the Church Service, we hurt them that stay with us, and ruin them that leave us ; for then they will go nowhere, but lounge the Sabbath away without any public worship at all.

Q. 46. Nay, but is it not our duty to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the Clergy and the people ?

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

Q. 47. But what reasons are there why we should not separate from the Church ?

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

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

Q. 48. Do we sufficiently watch over our Helpers ?

A. We might consider those that are with us as our pupils ; into whose behaviour and studies we should inquire every day. Should we not frequently ask each, Do you walk closely with God ? Have you now fellowship with the Father and the Son ? At what hour do you rise ? Do you punctually observe the morning and evening hour of retirement ? Do you spend the day in the manner which we advise ? Do you converse seriously, usefully, and closely ? To be more particular : Do you use all the means of grace yourself, and enforce the use of them on all other persons ?

They are either Instituted or Prudential :—

I. The INSTITUTED are,

(1.) Prayer ; private, family, public ; consisting of deprecation, petition, intercession, and thanksgiving. Do you use each of these ? Do you use private prayer every morning and evening ? if you can, at five in the evening ; and the hour before or



after morning preaching? Do you forecast daily, wherever you are, how to secure these hours? Do you avow it everywhere? Do you ask everywhere, "Have you family prayer?" Do you retire at five o'clock?

(2.) Searching the Scriptures by,

(i.) Reading: Constantly, some part of every day; regularly, all the Bible in order; carefully, with the Notes; seriously, with prayer before and after; fruitfully, immediately practising what you learn there?

(ii.) Meditating: At set times? by any rule?

(iii.) Hearing: Every morning? carefully; with prayer before, at, after; immediately putting in practice? Have you a New Testament always about you?

(3.) The Lord's supper: Do you use this at every opportunity? with solemn prayer before; with earnest and deliberate self-devotion?

(4.) Fasting: How do you fast every Friday?

(5.) Christian conference: Are you convinced how important and how difficult it is to "order your conversation right?" Is it "always in grace? seasoned with salt? meet to minister grace to the hearers?" Do not you converse too long at a time? Is not an hour commonly enough? Would it not be well always to have a determinate end in view; and to pray before and after it?

II. PRUDENTIAL MEANS we may use either as common Christians, as Methodists, as Preachers, or as Assistants.

(1.) As common Christians. What particular rules have you in order to grow in grace? What arts of holy living?

(2.) As Methodists. Do you never miss your class, or Band?

(3.) As Preachers. Do you meet every society; also the Leaders and Bands, if any?

(4.) As Assistants. Have you thoroughly considered your office; and do you make a conscience of executing every part of it?

These means may be used without fruit: But there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, exercise of the presence of God.

(1.) Do you steadily watch against the world, the devil, yourselves, your besetting sin?

(2.) Do you deny yourself every useless pleasure of sense,

imagination, honour? Are you temperate in all things? instance in food: Do you use only that kind and that degree which is best both for your body and soul? Do you see the necessity of this?

(3.) Do you eat no flesh suppers? no late suppers?

(4.) Do you eat no more at each meal than is necessary? Are you not heavy or drowsy after dinner?

(5.) Do you use only that kind and that degree of drink which is best both for your body and soul?

(6.) Do you drink water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for health, when will you begin again? to-day?

(7.) How often do you drink wine or ale? every day? Do you want it?

(8.) Wherein do you "take up your cross daily?" Do you cheerfully bear your cross (whatever is grievous to nature) as a gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

(9.) Do you endeavour to set God always before you; to see his eye continually fixed upon you? Never can you use these means but a blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more will you grow in grace.

Q. 49. What can be done, in order to a closer union of our Helpers with each other.

A. (1.) Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at present, and the absolute necessity of it.

(2.) Let them pray for a desire of union.

(3.) Let them speak freely to each other.

(4.) When they meet, let them never part without prayer.

(5.) Let them beware how they despise each other's gifts.

(6.) Let them never speak slightly of each other in any kind.

(7.) Let them defend one another's characters in everything, so far as consists with truth: And,

(8.) Let them labour in honour each to prefer the other before himself.

Q. 50. How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

A. Inquire, (1.) Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? (2.) Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound

understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? (3.) Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God, by their preaching?

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

Q. 51. What method may we use in receiving a new Helper?

A. A proper time for doing this is at a Conference after solemn fasting and prayer.

Every person proposed is then to be present; and each of them may be asked,—Have you faith in Christ? Are you "going on to perfection?" Do you expect to be "perfected in love" in this life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and to his work? Do you know the Methodist plan? Have you read the "Plain Account?" the "Appeals?" Do you know the Rules of the Society? of the Bands? Do you keep them? Do you take no snuff, tobacco, drams? Do you constantly attend the church and sacrament? Have you read the "Minutes of the Conference?" Are you willing to conform to them? Have you considered the Rules of a Helper; especially the First, Tenth, and Twelfth? Will you keep them for conscience' sake? Are you determined to employ all your time in the work of God? Will you preach every morning and evening; endeavouring not to speak too long, or too loud? Will you diligently instruct the children in every place? Will you visit from house to house? Will you recommend fasting, both by precept and example? Are you in debt? Are you engaged to marry?

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

We may then receive him as a probationer, by giving him the "Minutes of the Conference," inscribed thus:—

"TO A. B.

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

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

Observe: Taking on trial is entirely different from admitting

a Preacher. One on trial may be either admitted or rejected, without doing him any wrong; otherwise it would be no trial at all. Let every Assistant explain this to them that are on trial.

When he has been on trial four years, if recommended by the Assistant, he may be received into full connexion, by giving him the "Minutes," inscribed thus: "As long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by, these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow-labourer." Meantime, let none exhort in any of our societies, without a note of permission from the Assistant. Let every Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly; and let every Assistant insist upon it.

Q. 52. What is the method wherein we usually proceed in our Conferences?

A. We inquire,

(1.) What Preachers are admitted? Who remain on trial? Who are admitted on trial? Who desist from travelling?

(2.) Are there any objections to any of the Preachers? who are named one by one.

(3.) How are the Preachers stationed this year?

(4.) What numbers are in the society?

(5.) What is the Kingswood collection?

(6.) What boys are received this year?

(7.) What girls are assisted?

(8.) What is contributed for the contingent expenses?

(9.) How was this expended?

(10.) What is contributed toward the fund for superannuated and supernumerary Preachers?

(11.) What demands are there upon it?

(12.) How many Preachers' wives are to be provided for? By what societies?

(13.) Where and when may our next Conference begin?

Q. 53. How can we provide for superannuated and supernumerary Preachers?

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

(1.) Let every Travelling Preacher contribute half-a-guinea yearly at the Conference.

(2.) Let every one when first admitted as a Travelling Preacher pay a guinea.

(3.) Let this be lodged in the hands of the Stewards.

(4.) The present Stewards are John Murlin and John Pawson.

(5.) Out of this let provision be made, first for the worn-out Preachers, and then for the widows and children of those that are dead.

(6.) Every worn-out Preacher shall receive, if he wants it, at least ten pounds a-year.

(7.) Every widow of a Preacher shall receive yearly, if she wants it, during her widowhood, a sum not usually exceeding ten pounds.

(8.) Every child left by a Preacher shall receive, once for all, a sum not usually exceeding ten pounds.

(9.) But none is entitled to anything from this fund, till he has subscribed two guineas.

(10.) Nor any who neglects paying his subscription for four years together.

(11.) Let every Preacher who does not bring or send his subscription to the Conference, be fined two shillings and sixpence.

(12.) Let the fund never be reduced to less than a hundred pounds.

(13.) Let a Committee be named to see these Rules duly executed. The present Committee are,—Christopher Hopper, Thomas Coke, Thomas Hanby, John Allen, Robert Roberts, Henry Moore, Thomas Taylor, William Thompson, Andrew Blair.

(14.) Let an exact account of all receipts and disbursements be produced at the Conference.

(15.) Let every Assistant bring to the Conference the contribution of every Preacher in his Circuit.

Q. 54. Are not many of the Preachers' wives still straitened for the necessaries of life?

A. Some certainly have been. To prevent this for the time to come, (1.) Let every Circuit either provide each with a lodging, coals, and candles, or allow her fifteen pounds a year. (2.) Let the Assistant take this money at the Quarterly Meeting, before anything else be paid out of it. Fail not to do this.

Q. 55. How can we account for the decrease of the work of God in some Circuits, both this year and the last?

A. It may be owing either, (1.) To the want of zeal and exactness in the Assistant, occasioning want of discipline throughout: Or (2.) To want of life and diligence in the Preachers: Or (3.) To our people's losing the life of God, and sinking into the spirit of the world.

It may be owing, farther, to the want of more field-preaching, and of trying more new places.

Q. 56. What can be done in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed?

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

(2.) Let both Assistants and Preachers be conscientiously exact in the whole Methodist discipline.

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

Let not all the Preachers in any Circuit come to the Conference.

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

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

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

(6.) Be more active in dispersing the books, particularly the sermon on "The Good Steward," on "Indwelling Sin," "The Repentance of Believers," and "The Scripture Way of Salvation." Every Assistant may give away small tracts: And he may beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

(7.) Strongly and explicitly exhort all believers to "go on to perfection." That we may "all speak the same thing," I ask, once for all, Shall we defend this Perfection, or give it up? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby, (as we did from the beginning,) salvation from all sin, by the love of God and man filling our heart. The Papists say, "This cannot be attained, till we have been refined by the fire of purgatory." The Calvinists say, "Nay, it will be attained as soon as the soul and body part." The old Methodists say, "It may be attained before we die: A moment after is too late." Is it so or not? You are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin before death. The substance then is settled; but, as to the circumstance, is the

change gradual or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are justified, there may be a gradual sanctification, a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if sin cease before death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an instantaneous change; there must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not. "But should we in preaching insist both on one and the other?" Certainly we must insist on the gradual change; and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the instantaneous also? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? and the rather, because constant experience shows, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul; the more watchful they are against all sin, the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. Whereas, just the contrary effects are observed whenever this expectation ceases. They are "saved by hope," by this hope of a total change, with a gradually increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that salvation stands still, or, rather, decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual change in believers should strongly insist on the instantaneous.

Q. 57. What can be done to increase the work of God in Scotland?

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

Q. 58. How many Circuits are there now?

A. Of America we have no late account. There are seventy-four Circuits in England, Wales, and the Isle of Man; seven in Scotland, and twenty-eight in Ireland.

Q. 59. Are our preaching-houses safe?

A. Not all; for some of them are not settled on Trustees. Several of the Trustees for others are dead.

Q. 60. What then is to be done?

A. (1.) Let those who have debts on any of the Houses give a bond, to settle them as soon as they are indemnified. (2.) Let the surviving Trustees choose others without delay, by endorsing their deed thus:—

“WE, the remaining Trustees of the Methodist preaching-house in —, do, according to the power vested in us by this deed, choose — to be Trustees of the said House, in the place of —.

Witness our hands —.”

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

Q. 61. In what form may a House be settled?

A. In the following, which was drawn by three of the most eminent Lawyers in London. Whoever therefore objects to it, only betrays his own ignorance.

“The Indenture made — —, between Benjamin Heap, of —, in the county of —, on the one part, and Thomas Philips, hatter, &c., on the other part, WITNESSETH, That in consideration of five shillings, lawful money of Great Britain, by the said T. P., &c., to the said B. H., truly paid, before the sealing and delivering hereof, (the receipt whereof the said B. H. doth hereby acknowledge,) and for divers other considerations him thereunto moving, the said B. H. hath granted, bargained, and sold, and by these presents doth bargain and sell unto the said T. P., &c., their heirs and assigns for ever, all that lately erected House or tenement, with the yard thereunto adjoining, situate —, in —, aforesaid, now in the tenure or occupation of —, together with all the ways, drains, and privileges to the said premises appertaining, and all the profits thereof, with all the right, title, and interest in law and equity: TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said house, yard, and other premises, to the said T. P., &c., their heirs and assigns for ever. NEVERTHELESS, upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent, that they and the survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do and shall permit John Wesley, of the City-Road, London, Clerk, and such other persons as he shall from time to time appoint, at all times, during his natural life, and no other persons, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises; that the said John Wesley, and such other persons as he appoints, may therein preach and expound God’s holy word. And after his decease, upon further trust and confidence, and to the intent, that the said T. P., &c., or the major part of them, or the survivors of them, and the major part of the Trustees of the said premises for the time being, shall, from time to time, and at all times for ever, permit such persons as



shall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the people called *Methodists*, in London, Bristol, Leeds, Manchester, or elsewhere, specified by name in a Deed enrolled in Chancery, under the hand and seal of the said John Wesley, and bearing date the 28th day of February, 1784, and no others, to have and to enjoy the said premises, for the purposes aforesaid: Provided always, that the persons preach no other doctrine than is contained in Mr. Wesley's 'Notes upon the New Testament,' and four volumes of 'Sermons.' And upon farther trust and confidence, that, as often as any of these Trustees, or the Trustees for the time being, shall die, or cease to be a member of the society commonly called *Methodists*, the rest of the said Trustees, or of the Trustees for the time being, as soon as conveniently may be, shall and may choose another Trustee or Trustees, in order to keep up the number of — Trustees for ever. In witness whereof, the said B. H. hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the day and year above-written."

In this form the proprietors of the House are to make it over to five, seven, or nine Trustees.

Q. 62. But is this form a safe one? Should we not have the opinion of a Counsel upon it?

A. I think this would be throwing money away; (1.) Because this form was drawn up by three eminent Counsellors: But, (2.) It is the way of almost every Lawyer to blame what another has done. Therefore, you cannot at all infer, that they think a thing wrong, because they say so. (3.) If they did in reality think it wrong, this would not prove it was so. (4.) If there was (which I do not believe) some defect therein, who would go to law with the body of Methodists? But, (5.) If they did, would any Court in England put them out of possession; especially when the intent of the deed was plain and undeniable?

Q. 63. Is anything farther advisable with regard to building?

A. (1.) Build all preaching-houses, where the ground will permit, in the octagon form. It is best for the voice, and, on many accounts, more commodious than any other. (2.) Why should not any octagon House be built after the model of Yarm? any square House, after the model of Bath or Scarborough? Can we find any better model? (3.) Let the roof rise only one-third of its breadth: This is the true proportion. (4.) Have doors and windows enough; and let all the windows be sashes, opening downward. (5.) Let there be no Chinese

paling, and no tub-pulpit, but a square projection, with a long seat behind. (6.) Let there be no pews, and no backs to the seats, which should have aisles on each side, and be parted in the middle by a rail running all along, to divide the men from the women; just as at Bath. (7.) Let all preaching-houses be built plain and decent; but not more expensive than is absolutely unavoidable: Otherwise the necessity of raising money will make rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent upon them, yea, and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist discipline, if not doctrine too. (8.) Wherever a preaching-house is built, see that lodgings for the Preachers be built also.

Q. 64. Is there any exception to the rule, "Let the men and women sit apart?"

A. In those galleries where they have always sat together, they may do so still. But let them sit apart everywhere below, and in all new-erected galleries.

Q. 65. But how can we secure their sitting apart there?

A. I must do it myself. If I come into any new House, and see the men and women together, I will immediately go out. I hereby give public notice of this: Pray let it be observed.

Q. 66. But there is a worse indecency than this creeping in among us,—talking in the preaching-houses, before and after service. How shall this be cured?

A. Let all the Preachers join as one man, and the very next Sunday they preach in any place, enlarge on the impropriety of talking before or after service, and strongly exhort them to do it no more. In three months, if we are in earnest, this vile practice will be banished out of every Methodist congregation. Let none stop till he has carried his point.

Q. 67. Is there not another shocking indecency frequently practised by filthy men against the wall of a preaching-house; enough to make any modest woman blush?

A. There is: But I beg any one who sees another do this will give him a hearty clap on the back.

Q. 68. Complaint has been made that sluts spoil our houses. How may we prevent this?

A. Let none that has spoiled one, ever live in another. But what a shame is this! A Preacher's wife should be a pattern of cleanliness in her person, clothes, and habitation. Let nothing slatternly be seen about her; no rags, no dirt, no litter. And

she should be a pattern of industry ; always at work, either for herself, her husband, or the poor. I am not willing any should live in the Orphan-House at Newcastle, or any preaching-house, who does not conform to this rule.

Q. 69. It has been complained also, that people crowd into the Preachers' houses, as into coffee-houses, without any invitation. Is this right ?

A. It is utterly wrong. Stop it at once. Let no person come into the Preacher's house, unless he wants to ask a question.

Q. 70. May any new preaching-houses be built ?

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

Q. 71. What can be done to make the Methodists sensible of the excellency of Kingswood School ?

A. Let every Assistant read the following account of it yearly in every congregation :—

(1.) The wisdom and love of God have now thrust out a large number of labourers into His harvest ; men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the glory of God, by saving their own souls and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things are willing to minister to them of their carnal things ; so that they " have food to eat, and raiment to put on," and are content therewith.

(2.) A competent provision is likewise made for the wives of married Preachers. These also lack nothing, having a weekly allowance over and above for their little children ; so that neither they nor their husbands need to be " careful about many things," but may " wait upon the Lord without distraction."

(3.) Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have boys, when they grow too big to be under their mother's direction. Having no father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this, we have a school on purpose for them, wherein they have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the body, clothes only excepted. And it may be, if God prosper this labour of love, they will have these too, shortly.

(4.) In whatever view we look upon this, it is one of the

noblest charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the Institution ! Is it fit that the children of those who leave wife, and all that is dear, to save souls from death, should want what is needful either for soul or body ? Ought not we to supply what the parent cannot, because of his labours in the gospel ? How excellent are the effects of this Institution ! The Preacher eased of this weight, can the more cheerfully go on in his labour. And perhaps many of these children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall “ rest from their labours.”

(5.) It is not strange therefore, considering the excellence of this design, that Satan should have taken much pains to defeat it, particularly by lies of every kind, which were plentifully invented and handed about for several years. But truth now generally prevails, and its adversaries are put to silence. It is well known that the children want nothing ; that they scarce know what sickness means ; that they are well instructed in whatever they are capable of learning ; that they are carefully and tenderly governed ; and that the behaviour of all in the house, elder and younger, is “ as becometh the gospel of Christ.”

(6.) But the expense of such an undertaking is very large, so that we are ill able to defray it. The best means we could think of at our Conference to supply the deficiency, is, once a year to desire the assistance of all those in every place, who wish well to the work of God ; who long to see sinners converted to God, and the kingdom of Christ set up in all the earth.

(7.) All of you who are thus minded have an opportunity now of showing your love to the gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest charities in the world. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent designs that ever was set on foot in this kingdom. Do what you can to comfort the parents who give up their all for you, and to give their children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer for what you do on such an occasion. God is a good paymaster. And you know, in doing this, you lend unto the Lord : In due time he shall pay you again.

Q. 72. But how can we keep out of debt ?

A. Let a collection be made for this school the Sunday before or after Midsummer, in every preaching-house, great and small, throughout England, Scotland, and Ireland.

Q. 73. How may we raise a general fund for carrying on the whole work of God?

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

To this end he may then read and enlarge upon the following hints in every society:—

(1.) How shall we send labourers into those parts where they are most of all wanted? suppose the North-West of Ireland, and the North of Scotland. Many are willing to hear, but not to bear the expense. Nor can it as yet be expected of them: Stay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon us, in the mean time, to supply their lack of service? to raise a general fund, out of which, from time to time, that expense may be defrayed? By this means those who willingly offer themselves may travel through every part, and stay wherever there is a call, without being burdensome to any. Thus may the gospel, in the life and power thereof, be spread from sea to sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your mite, to promote this glorious work?

(2.) Besides this, in carrying on so large a work through the three kingdoms, there are calls for money in various ways, and we must frequently be at considerable expense, or the work must be at a full stop. Many too are the occasional distresses of our Preachers or their families, which require an immediate supply. Otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work.

(3.) Let then every member of our society once a year set his shoulder to the work; contributing more or less as God hath prospered him, at the Lady-Day visitation of the classes. Let none be excluded from giving something,—be it a penny, a halfpenny, a farthing. Remember the widow's two mites! And let those who are able to give shillings, crowns, and pounds, do it willingly. The money contributed will be brought to the ensuing Conference.

(4.) Men and brethren, help! Was there ever a call like this, since you first heard the gospel sound? Help to relieve your companions in the kingdom of Jesus, who are pressed above measure.

“Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of

Christ." Help to send forth able, willing labourers into your Lord's harvest: So shall ye be assistant in saving souls from death, and hiding a multitude of sins. Help to spread the gospel of your salvation into the remotest corners of the kingdom, till "the knowledge of our Lord shall cover the land, as the waters cover the sea." So shall it appear to ourselves, and all men, that we are indeed one body, united by one spirit; so shall the baptized Heathens be yet again constrained to say, "See how these Christians love one another!" In this may not even the Romanists provoke us to jealousy? They have a general fund at Rome, and another at Paris, which bears all the expenses of their Missionaries throughout all the world.

Q. 74. What is the direct antidote to Methodism, the doctrine of heart-holiness?

A. Calvinism: All the devices of Satan, for these fifty years, have done far less toward stopping this work of God, than that single doctrine. It strikes at the root of salvation from sin, previous to glory, putting the matter on quite another issue.

Q. 75. But wherein lie the charms of this doctrine? What makes men swallow it so greedily?

A. (1.) It seems to magnify Christ; although in reality it supposes him to have died in vain. For the absolutely elect must have been saved without him; and the non-elect cannot be saved by him.

(2.) It is highly pleasing to flesh and blood, final perseverance in particular.

Q. 76. What can be done to guard against it?

A. (1.) Let all our Preachers carefully read over ours and Mr. Fletcher's Tracts.

(2.) Let them frequently and explicitly preach the truth, though not in a controversial way. But let them take care to do it in love and gentleness; not in bitterness, not returning railing for railing: Let those who preach it have all this to themselves.

(3.) Do not imitate them in screaming, allegorizing, boasting: Rather mildly expose these things when time serves.

(4.) Imitate them in this: They readily seize upon any one that is newly convinced or converted. Be diligent to prevent them, and to guard those tender minds against the predestinarian poison.

(5.) Answer all their objections, as occasion offers, both in

public and private. But take care to do this with all possible sweetness both of look and of accent.

(6.) Very frequently, both in public and private, advise our people not to hear them.

(7.) Make it matter of constant and earnest prayer, that God would stop the plague.

Q. 77. We said in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

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

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

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

Once more review the whole affair:

(1.) Who of us is now accepted of God?

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

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

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

(3.) Is this the same with "he that is sincere?"

Nearly, if not quite.

(4.) Is not this salvation by works?

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

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

I am afraid about words, namely, in some of the foregoing instances.

(6.) As to merit itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded according to our works, yea, because

of our works. How does this differ from, "for the sake of our works?" And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*? which is no more than, "as our works deserve." Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

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

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

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