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# A FREE CHURCH

AND

## A FREE MINISTRY.

### ADDRESSES

ON THE MINISTRY AND CHURCH POLITY OF THE  
APOSTOLIC AGE, AND THEIR ADAPTATION TO  
THE NEEDS OF THE PRESENT DAY; TO WHICH  
IS PREFIXED A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE  
HISTORY, DOCTRINES, AND PRINCIPLES  
OF THE INDEPENDENT METHODIST  
CHURCHES.

BY

*WILLIAM BRIMELOW.*

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THIRD EDITION.

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LONDON:

ELLIOT STOCK, 62, PATERNOSTER ROW.



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## P R E F A C E .

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THE Addresses published in this Book were delivered at Public Meetings in connection with the Annual Assembly of the Independent Methodist Churches, in various years and places, between 1879 and 1900. The topics were mostly chosen by Local Committees of Churches where the audiences assembled. Hence there is little sequence in the Order of Subjects, and some overlapping in thought and expression were inevitable. It had been my earnest desire to recast the matter and to present it more methodically, but the claims for service in the Denomination and other spheres have prevented this intention being carried out. The Book is therefore issued in its present form with the hope that it may assist in making clear the aims and commending the practice of A Free Church and A Free Ministry.



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PART I.

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HISTORY, DOCTRINES, POLITY,

AND

ADDRESSES

PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.

# INDEPENDENT METHODIST CHURCHES.

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## I. OUTLINE OF HISTORY, DOCTRINES, AND POLITY.

THE Denomination whose doctrines and polity are herein set forth embraces about one hundred and fifty Churches, located chiefly in Lancashire, Yorkshire, and several Northern Counties, but their principles are shared and carried out by far more numerous isolated bodies of Christians in England, America, Canada, and in almost all parts of the world.

Many of the Churches in the Denomination owe their origin to the missionary spirit which animated the founders of the system and their followers; but others are off-shoots, almost invariably from some branch of the Methodist family. It may be safely affirmed, however, that in all instances, although the place of origin may have been widely distant, and entirely independent of any similar movement elsewhere, the fundamental principle at the foundation of the Church has been the same. In every case it has been a revolt against the arbitrary exercise of ministerial authority in the Church. The particular occasion and form of such capricious use



of power have often been different, but the spirit of lordship over the brethren has always been similar; and the aim of those who have resented the ministerial domination has been to found a Church whose government shall not be in exclusive hands, but in those of the members themselves, and whose basis of operations shall provide scope for the fullest development of the spiritual capacities, powers, and usefulness of each member of the body.

Thus, while the Churches comprising the Denomination are not all radiations from one common centre, they are, nevertheless, perfectly homogeneous in sentiment, and completely harmonious in principle. In not a few instances, Churches have existed separately and independently for years, and, on becoming acquainted with the Denomination, they have been surprised to recognize their own views in practice, and to behold their aspirations realized in the experience of previously unknown co-workers. Such a fact, besides displaying the unity of aim and sentiment which characterizes the various Churches in the Denomination, goes far to demonstrate the need for and to justify our separate existence as a branch of the Church of Christ.

#### ORIGIN OF THE DENOMINATION.

As stated in the Address on "Independent Methodism in the Past," the Denomination had its origin about the year 1797. Considerable dissatisfaction prevailed in the Wesleyan Society at Warrington, Lancashire.



Several brethren on the plan were able preachers, and more popular in the circuit than the Superintendent Minister himself; but he thought proper to exclude these brethren from the more important pulpits. No allegations were preferred against these brethren touching either ability, character, or doctrine. Their appointments to minor Churches in the circuit were continued; but by the ministerial fiat the pulpits of the larger Churches were barred against them. As they were successful labourers in word and doctrine, men whose fame was in all the Churches, considerable agitation and unpleasantness ensued. This unhappy state of things was intensified by the arbitrariness of the Superintendent in matters of finance. The result was that the brethren who would not submit to this dictation were severed from the Old Body and founded a Church, which soon afterwards secured a location at Friar's Green, where it has continued to exist for more than one hundred years, the centenary being celebrated in 1897.

Such, briefly, was the origin of the oldest Church in the Denomination; and in general characteristics, it portrays the history of every Church in the Union which has had a separate and independent formation.

The friends composing the Church were in the first instance styled "Quaker Methodists," because they were joined by several members of the Society of Friends, because most of them adopted the Quaker fashion of dress, and further they were imbued with Quaker views of the Ministry; but after some years they adopted the title "Independent Methodists"—"Independent"



signifying that the Church was self-governed, all the members having a voice in the management of Church matters; and "Methodist," indicating the doctrines preached and form of worship and means of grace. In other towns and districts Churches holding the same views have been formed, styling themselves "Free Gospel Churches," "Christian Brethren," "Lay Churches," &c. In the year 1854 (after the Union had existed for nearly fifty years under the title of "Independent Methodists") the Churches associated together agreed, for the purpose of common identification, and to express more clearly their position regarding the unpaid character of the Ministry, to style themselves in their aggregate or collective capacity "The United Free Gospel Churches," at the same time retaining their own local designations. In 1898 this decision was reviewed and by a unanimous vote the Annual Assembly reverted to the older title, and the Denomination is now styled the "Independent Methodist Connexion."

#### DOCTRINES.

##### I.

The doctrines preached in our Churches are those commonly expressed by the term Evangelical. These, shortly stated, embrace belief in the existence of one only living and true God, the eternal, omnipresent, omniscient Being, perfectly holy and just, infinitely wise and good, the Creator and Governor of the Universe; also in the Holy Trinity; in the Deity and Humanity of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God; and in the



Divinity and Personality of the Holy Spirit, three Persons but one God.

## II.

We believe that, through the fall of our first parents from the state of innocence in which they were created, all men inherit a morally diseased nature, and although all are not equally depraved, all have, by actual transgression, rendered themselves liable to eternal perdition.

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ, by his death on the Cross, offered an atonement, a propitiatory sacrifice, for the sins of all mankind.

And, further, that every truly penitent sinner, on forsaking his sins, and trusting wholly in Christ for salvation, receives pardon, and through the Holy Spirit an assurance of acceptance with God; and that through the same grace he is justified, and by the blood of Jesus, which cleanseth from all sin, he is sanctified and fitted for the inheritance of the saints in light.

## III.

We believe in the Resurrection of the dead, the raised body being spiritual and immortal; and in a General Judgment, when those who have neglected the salvation offered through the mercy of God shall "depart into everlasting punishment;" and those who have accepted redemption through Christ shall be received into "life eternal."

## IV.

We accept the Bible as the revelation of God's will



to man, revering its truths as of Divine authority, receiving it as written by holy men of God inspired by the Holy Spirit, and as containing the words of eternal life, and man's only safe guide along the journey of life to the land of endless joy and blessedness.

Subscription to the articles of belief held by the Churches is not absolutely a condition of membership; but it is obviously very desirable, where every member is actively engaged in Christian work, that general unity of teaching should prevail. Indeed, it is probable that in all cases the usefulness of a Church is impaired by persons of mature judgment remaining in it after they have discarded its fundamental beliefs.

#### CHURCH CONSTITUTION AND POLITY.

Every follower of Christ, professing to have experienced a change of heart, and giving evidence by his life and attendance at the means of grace (usually the class or Fellowship meeting or the Lord's Supper Service), that by conversion he has passed from death unto life, and from the power of Satan unto God, and agreeing with our polity, is eligible for Church membership.

The entire management of the affairs of the Church is vested in the members thereof, only those of full age, however (as a rule), exercising the right to vote. The affairs thus vested in the Church include the appointment of preachers, the election of officers, the reception and dismissal of members, the control of finances, the ownership (through trustees appointed by the Church)



of chapel and school property, and all other matters concerning the work and organization of the Church.

This right of self-government is exercised in various ways, as each Church may determine. In some cases, the extreme democratic principle is followed, and all matters, trivial as well as important, are brought before a general meeting of the Church members; but more commonly, the delegative or representative principle obtains, and details are worked out by a committee or by officers, usually called Leaders, Elders, Deacons, and Stewards; but these are appointed by and responsible to the Church, giving account of their proceedings quarterly or annually as may be appointed; and thus the central principle of the Church being the seat and source of authority is maintained.

#### THE MINISTRY.

The most capable and gifted brethren are called by the Church to exercise their talents in the ministry. Where Churches are small, there will probably at most be only one brother suitable for pulpit service; but, as a rule, if the Church has been long enough in existence, and has been faithful in training her sons, there will at least be several to whom the work of preaching the Gospel and edifying the Church will be committed as a sacred trust.

As a consequence of the plurality of preachers in the Church, in harmony with the teaching of our Saviour that it is "more blessed to give than to receive," and in accordance with Apostolic practice and injunction, their



services are rendered without fee or reward, the noble example of the Apostle Paul, who maintained himself by the labour of his hands, and assisted his brethren, and enjoined the like course upon the Bishops and Elders of the early Churches, being the true assurance of a perfectly disinterested and faithful ministry.

But as weak Churches require help from time to time, and as it is the duty of the Church to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to every creature, obligations which cannot always be discharged by those who are settled in business or following fixed avocations, brethren are chosen as Evangelists, to go from place to place, building up feeble Churches, and proclaiming the Gospel in new fields of labour; and, whilst so engaged, whether permanently or periodically, they may, if so requiring it, be maintained by the voluntary contributions of the Churches, for the same Apostle who enjoined upon resident ministers the duty of maintaining themselves, claimed for Evangelists the "right to live of the Gospel."

Believing that clerical distinctions, such as the title "Rev." and other ecclesiastical prefixes, as well as clerical dress, exert a baneful influence, and are a hindrance to the work of the Church, we wholly discard all such distinctions. We not only refrain from using clerical and ministerial titles among ourselves, we decline on principle to recognize them as rightfully belonging to others.

#### CIRCUITS OR DISTRICTS.

Churches within convenient distance from each



other arrange themselves by their own action in circuits or districts, for promoting the interchange of preachers, for mutual counsel and advice, and for friendly intercourse, as well as for combined effort in the work of extending the Redeemer's Kingdom.

#### ANNUAL ASSEMBLY.

A meeting of representatives appointed by the Churches is held annually, at which reports and statistics of the condition and progress of the Churches are received, and recommendations made which it is hoped may conduce to greater efficiency and secure enlarged prosperity. The assembly has no legislative functions, being purely consultative, its resolutions depending for vitality and usefulness upon their loyal acceptance by the Churches.

#### CONNEXIONAL LITERATURE.

We issue monthly a Magazine, which is the organ of the Union and medium for communicating intelligence of the work of the Churches. We also publish a Hymn Book, which has been warmly appreciated by some high authorities on hymnology.

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## II. OUR DENOMINATIONAL AIMS.

[*Ashton-under-Lyne, 1879.*]

Our mission as a Denomination is to do our share in winning the world for Christ. Of course, all Christian bodies claim that as their object. From those gentlemen whose altar-lights and vestments and postures are giving Parliament and the Ecclesiastical Courts so much trouble, down to Mrs. Girling,\* who is a source of great perplexity to the magistrates in Hampshire—all are professedly aiming to bring the world to Christ. We must, therefore, have some clearer definition. Still, I do not want to part hastily with that definition. I am for this Denomination, but I am for Christ first. We stand firmly as a religious community to our Denominational principles; but our object is not mere Denominationalism. We simply regard our Denomination as a means to an end—that end being the spread of the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Looking, then, at our Denomination from this point of view, I should say our mission is threefold.

1. It is to sustain and develop the Spiritual Life peculiar to Methodism.
2. It is to sustain and develop the Free Church Life characteristic of Independency.
3. It is to restore among Christians the Personal Activity in the cause of Christ which distinguished the Apostolic age.

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\* Head of the "Shaker" community in the New Forest.



## PERSONAL EFFORT IN APOSTOLIC TIMES.

Now, confining myself to the last point only, it will be admitted that Christianity in its early days was sustained and propagated by Individual Agency. The three thousand converted on the day of Pentecost did not return to their own countries and settle down under the ministration of the Word by somebody else: they became evangelists, bearing with them the glorious truth they themselves had received, and carrying it to others. Every fresh convert was a distinct addition to the propagating forces of the new faith; and by these means the Gospel triumphed over persecution and surmounted every obstacle, until Imperial Rome bowed at His sceptre and owned Christ conquerer.

## STATE PATRONAGE.

But a new power was brought into play for the advancement of the Christian religion. The State unfortunately took up the work, and there followed an experiment for more than a thousand years of how monarchs, and rulers, and governments would bring the world to Christ. I need not trace the history of that experiment. You know it is written in wrong, oppression, blood and failure. We now see clearly that the Civil Power cannot help us in this work, and our trouble to-day is how we may shake off such remnants of that huge wrong and failure as remain.

## CHRISTIAN WORK BY PROXY.

But during the last hundred years or more another



experiment has been tried, which, without meaning any offence, we call a System of Proxy. Under this system Christian men have joined themselves together and agreed to set apart and pay one man to discharge the active religious duties of the whole body. Now, I should be ashamed to say one word against the Brethren employed under this system. As a class, I speak of them with esteem and reverence. A large measure of success has attended their ministry; and seeing the state of England to-day I durst not, if I had the power, stop the mouth of a single true minister of Christ, although he be salaried. But there are several things I dare affirm about this system. In the first place, the system of sustaining and propagating religion by proxy will never win the world for Christ. I want to be clearly understood. I do not believe that the work of spreading Christianity can be carried on without money. *We* want money; and if there is anybody with us simply because it is cheaper, then I despise such a motive. Nor do I think the world will be brought to Christ wholly without paid labour. But it is one thing to use paid effort where it is really needed, as in the case of evangelistic work, and it is another thing altogether to make it the basis of your Church existence and operations.

#### INADEQUACY OF THE PAID SYSTEM.

The Paid System is breaking down on every hand. The Church of England can go no further—the supply of clergy is deficient; more funds cannot be raised, and



the cry is that unpaid labour must be utilized. The Nonconforming bodies are moving in the same direction. Wesleyan and Primitive and other forms of Methodism have long been sustained largely by unpaid effort, and Congregationalists and Baptists feel they must extend this branch of their ministerial service. Look for a moment at the foreign mission field. We raise in England, I suppose, about £2,000,000 for the conversion of the heathen world. We provide about one man for every 100,000. Will the world ever be won for Christ at that rate? The task is impossible! At home, the world is gaining upon us. Population grows faster than Church membership everywhere. We, therefore, need to broaden the *basis* of our religious activity.\* You have done this in *Politics*. Formerly government was in the hands of a few, but now every householder must play his part as a citizen of the commonwealth. You have done this, too, in the matter of *Education*. Formerly education was in the hands of a few; now education is in the hands of the people, and, thank God, the last child is born in England who

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\* Compare the two systems [personal service and proxy service]. We shall suppose first that we raise money enough to employ, say, two hundred thousand missionaries, and that on an average each of them shall be the means of converting, say, ten souls every year, and thus, adding to the Church annually two millions of souls, how long would it take to convert the world by such means? Upwards of a thousand years. Or let us suppose that there are at present one million earnest Christians, and every hundred of them supports a missionary. We shall also suppose that every missionary has ten converts annually, and that every hundred converts support another missionary;—we should then have ten thousand missionaries and one hundred thousand converts during the first year. How long would it take to convert the world? Upwards of a thousand



will be allowed to grow up an ignorant child. Now we say, carry this principle a step further, and let every man discharge his own responsibility in the great work of *Religion*. If you cannot succeed in politics or education by proxy, still less can you succeed in winning the world for Christ.

#### APPEAL FOR MEN OF GREAT TALENTS.

Hitherto the unpaid ministry has had a stigma of ignorance cast upon it. This has not been deserved, and in many cases it has been unjust. When men have been excluded from schools it is an unworthy thing to sneer at them for their want of learning; they should rather be honoured for the consecration of such talents as they possess. But we do not want an ignorant ministry for Christ. We say, let the combined piety, godliness, intellect, culture, refinement, and energy of the land all be consecrated to Christ. I think with pleasure upon the fact that, when the time for rest from the arduous duties of statesmanship and legislation comes, men like Lord Selborne, ex-Lord Chancellor, and Mr. Gladstone find their way into the Sabbath

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years. The reason is obvious; in any new mission field the increase would be large at first, because the deaths would be few, but after some time the increase would be checked, and at length, when the number of converts had so multiplied that the deaths should balance the conversions, the increase would be arrested. But we shall next suppose that there are at present only one thousand earnest Christians in the whole world, and that we were to get a higher style of Christianity, so that every convert would be the means of converting on an average, ONE SOUL EVERY TWO YEARS, the world with its eleven hundred millions of souls would be converted in thirty years.—*Evangelistic Baptism*.



school, and seek to infuse into the hearts of the young a loving faith in Christ, and to mould their lives by the blessed hope of the Gospel. But from the higher ministry of the Word of Eternal Life these great and distinguished men are excluded. The *law* does this in the case of the Church of England; and what the law does for them *custom* does for Nonconformist churches. We say—Break that barrier down, and wherever there be piety and gifts suitable—irrespective of clerical or ministerial orders—let them be impounded for the highest service of Christ. I might come a little nearer home. There is a mind of giant intellectual strength, vigorous will, untiring energy, which can move Chambers of Commerce\* and inspire men to activity in the great work of temperance reform, and for the attainment of political rights and civil and religious freedom; and why should not that great intellect, which is such a manifest force in all other relations of life, be consecrated to the service of Christ, and from the *pulpits* as well as the *platforms* of Lancashire proclaim the priceless truths of salvation to our fellowmen?

#### PRACTICABILITY OF THESE PRINCIPLES.

But are these ideas practicable? Is it a visionary ideal, desirable but unattainable? Or is it one that may be worked out in life? Can churches be sustained on such a principle, and Christianity be propagated by such agency? Well, in reply, I belong to a Church that has tried these principles for sixty years. It has

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\* Mr. Hugh Mason, J P., was in the chair.



all along been sustained by an unpaid ministry ; and to-day we have nearly two hundred members on our church-roll, over five hundred scholars in our Sunday School, and over five hundred in our Day School, with Band of Hope, Library, Sick Society, Clothing Club, and all the accessories of religious, moral and social usefulness. Two generations have grown up within its embrace ; many have been trained up to useful positions in society, and to discharge their duties as good citizens ; many have passed away to the better land, and on their dying beds have given testimony to the vitality of the spiritual life within, and left an assurance that they were going to be with Christ, which is far better. What stronger evidence of a true Church of Christ can you have than this ? My heart has been cheered to-day beyond power of utterance by the announcement that in the circle of our little denomination God has owned the labours put forth by adding to our membership during the past year no fewer than 380 souls, besides a large addition to the church members on probation. These facts demonstrate the practicability of our principles, and they also bid us to take courage, to nerve ourselves for greater efforts in the future, and for the exercise of stronger faith in God. No labour brings such blessed satisfaction to our own hearts or such rich results as that spent in the service of Christ. Political work has its reward in the increased happiness of a nation ; social reform and civil rights add to the comforts and contentment of a people ; but work done for Christ is immortal—for when the sun of



statesmanship has set, when the days of civil life have ended, and the hour of social advancement is spent, then they that have been wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that have turned many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.





### III. ORIGIN AND INFLUENCE OF CLERICAL DISTINCTIONS.

[*Warrington, 1881.*]

I think we may with great confidence affirm that the principles of Independent Methodism strike their roots deep in the practice of the first Christian Churches and of the Apostles themselves. A book was published only recently which I have read with immense pleasure and satisfaction. It is the Bampton Lectures for 1880. It is not written by a political Dissenter, always ready to have a "shot" at the Establishment; it is written by a Churchman who holds a high position at the Oxford University. In this work he traces the framework of the Christian Church from the time of the Apostles. The author tells us the principles on which the first Churches were founded, how they came to appoint officers, what the positions of those officers were, and the functions they had to discharge.

NO "CLERGY" NOR "LAITY" IN APOSTOLIC TIMES.

Now the point to which I wish to call your attention is this: It is abundantly established by the author of the Bampton Lectures that in the early Churches (and for a very long time after the Apostolic age) there were no distinctions between Clergy and Laity. The officers of the early Churches of whom we read in the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles were not clerical at all. Take the most ecclesiastical-looking of all the offices in the New Testament—I mean the office of Bishop. Mr.



Hatch tells us that Bishops, which were in the plural in each Church, were not ecclesiastical officers. Bishop was simply a title borrowed from the civil Government of the time. Certain civil officers in provinces of the empire distant from Rome were styled Bishops or overseers; and when the members of the early Churches wanted overseers, they appointed brethren (more than one in each Church) and styled them Bishops, as the Roman civil officers were called. And what Bishop was among the Romans, Elder was among the Jews. Both were civil officers originally, and not ecclesiastical.

#### ORIGIN OF THE DISTINCTION.

But the author of the Bampton Lectures for 1880 goes further. He not only shows that no distinctions existed among the early Churches between Clergy and Laity, but he traces the history of those distinctions, and shows how they originated. Long after the death of the Apostles, the spiritual functions of the Church were exercised in common by all gifted members of the Church, whether in office or not; but by-and-bye Bishops began to assume authority, and did not consider it quite dignified that they should be preached to by Laymen. Hence came the first step: a Layman must not preach in the presence of a Bishop. Then other officers lifted themselves a step, and no Layman must preach in the presence of any Church officer. Then came the third step, prohibiting Laymen from preaching at all. From that time the Clergy became a separate class, absorbing among themselves the spiritual



functions of the Church. Now, later in his book, Mr. Hatch defends this separation of the Clergy from the Laity. In his judgment the union of the Church and State was desirable; but we will take the historical facts which Mr. Hatch puts before us, and deduce our own arguments therefrom. And the point I wish you to seize is this, that in the early Churches there were no distinctions between Clergy and Laity. It, therefore, follows that Peter Phillips and other Founders of Independent, Methodism based their system of Church organization on the model of the New Testament and of the early Churches. That being so, such a system has a fair right to a place in Christendom. We do not require, as we sometimes think we do, to defend our system. It has its defence and its justification in the practice of the Apostles and of the early Churches, and it is for those who have departed from those principles to defend and justify their departure.

#### INFLUENCE OF THE DISTINCTION.

Now I proceed to another point which is of practical importance. I think all distinctions between Clergy and Laity are an element of moral and spiritual weakness in the Church of Christ. When a man is set apart from the business of the world, he is expected to live a purer, a holier life; and it follows that what are styled Laymen are contented with a lower plane of spiritual altitude. Allow me to illustrate this point by an allusion which is not common in these assemblies. I refer to a horse



race. A few years ago one of the great annual events in the turf world came off, and when the winning horse was known a singular thing happened. Editors of newspapers which support that institution dipped their pens in ink and were ready to congratulate the winner, when it occurred to them it would be just as well to know a little about him. They inquired who the owner of the fortunate horse was, and they found it was a Mr. King; and they asked who was Mr. King. And it turned out that he was a clergyman. "Why," they said, "this will never do;" and a controversy arose among the editors as to whether a clergyman ought to enter the turf ring. They were supporters of horse-racing, bear in mind, but they objected to a clergyman mixing himself up with the affairs of the turf. In other words, they had one code of morals for Laymen and another for Clergymen. And this runs through all society. Members of congregations and of Churches generally do not think they should be expected to live lives of purity and holiness such as the Clergyman and the minister set apart from business is expected to live—a state of things which is totally at variance with the teachings of the Gospel and with the exalted privileges of the Christian religion, which call upon all to be Kings and Priests unto God.

#### THE UNREACHED MASSES.

The question is often discussed, why so small a proportion of the population of this country is interested in the cause of Christ. Arthur Mursell, whose fame as



a lecturer amongst working men is not excelled by any man in England, gives us an answer to that question. He tells us that one great reason why so few working men feel an interest in religion is the great gulf which separates the Laity from the Clergy ; and therefore, he says it is one of his primary objects in life to do away with all badges and distinctions between the Clergy and Laity. Like Mr. R. W. Dale, a leader among the Congregationalists, and Mr. Spurgeon, a leader of the Baptists, Mr. Mursell has discarded Clerical titles and distinctions, and has thus advanced a step nearer the basis of the Apostles and the early Churches.

#### HIGHEST ALTITUDE OF SELF-SACRIFICE.

There is one further point on which I would like to say a word. I think there will be no difficulty in establishing the proposition that the system founded by Peter Phillips and his co-workers would raise the leaders of Christian work to a higher elevation of disinterestedness and to a grander altitude of self-sacrifice. You remember how the Apostle Paul defended his right to go a warfare at the charge of others. He claimed the right as an Apostle to live by the Gospel ; but as we read his splendid charge to the Bishops at Ephesus, do we not feel that because he did not exercise his right, but maintained himself, he stands on a higher plane and comes nearer the self-sacrificing spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ ? Even if it be right to live of the Gospel, St. Paul shows us that it is a grander and nobler thing not to exercise the right.



## CARLYLE'S PEASANT SAINT.

As relevant to this point, I would like to quote a few words from the writings of a great man who has passed away from us. I allude to Thomas Carlyle. It is a passage which I think ought to be cherished in the heart of and remembered with gratitude by every Independent Methodist. "There are," says Carlyle, "two men I honour. First, the toil-worn craftsman that with earth-made implements laboriously conquers the earth and make her man's." To such Carlyle says: "Toil on, toil on; *thou* art in thy duty, be out of it who may; thou toilest for the altogether indispensable daily bread." "A second man I honour," he says "and still more highly. Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable; not daily bread, but the Bread of Life. Is he not, too, in his duty? If the poor and humble toil that we have food, must not the high and more glorious toil for him in return that he have Light, Guidance, Freedom, Immortality? These two in all their degrees I honour. Unspeakably touching is it, however"—and this is the point I wish to emphasize—"Unspeakably touching is it, however. when I find both dignities united—and he that must toil outwardly for the lowest of man's wants is also toiling inwardly for the highest. Sublimer in this world I know nothing than a Peasant Saint. Such a one will take thee back to Nazareth itself; thou wilt see the splendour of heaven spring forth from the humblest depths of earth like a light shining in darkness."



## IV.—OUR SCRIPTURAL BASIS.

[*Part of a lecture delivered in various towns.*]

All our Churches have been established to assert the right of the Church to govern itself and to realise an open and Free Ministry. Our fathers found good men expelled from society at the will of the Superintendent Minister. They were required to make contributions of money, of which no account was rendered to the Church. They had no voice in selecting those who should occupy the pulpit; and when some more gifted brethren were desired by the Church for pulpit service, they were allowed or excluded at the caprice of the Superintendent Minister.

Our fathers therefore established Churches which should in the first place be Methodist Churches, where the doctrines of Methodism should be preached, and the forms of worship and usages of Methodism observed.

2. They established Churches which should be self-governed, each Church having control of all its affairs both as to the possession of Chapel property, the supply of the pulpit, the control of finances, and the management of all affairs.

3. They established Churches, avoiding the evils of the one-man ministry by placing the privileges and responsibilities of pulpit service in the hands of the most capable and gifted brethren in every Church, without fee or reward.



## GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH BY THE CHURCH.

Now are these views Scriptural? We answer that they are. According to the New Testament the source of authority is in the Church and not in any one man.

The direction of Bishops, Ministers, Missionaries, etc., was the work of the Church. In the New Testament (Acts xv. 22) we read in reference to a point of doctrine about which differences arose, "Then pleased it the Apostles and Elders with *the whole Church* to send chosen men of their own company to Antioch"; and that "they wrote letters by them, after this manner: The Apostles and Elders and *brethren*, send greeting, &c."

After Christ's Ascension when it was desired that an "Apostle" should be elected in the place of Judas, the Eleven, with the other disciples *numbering* "about *one hundred and twenty*," gave themselves to prayer, and they elected Matthias by lot.

It is clear that in these cases, which are examples of many others which might be quoted, that the whole Church was consulted and deliberated upon the matter, that the decision arrived at was the decision of the whole Church, and on the question of disputed doctrine the communication declaring the decision was issued in the name and on behalf of the whole Church, and not of the Apostles and Elders only.

Clergymen and ordained ministers generally regard themselves as holding offices and positions of authority over the Church. This was not the case in the early days of Christianity, for we find Paul and other



Apostles subject to the direction of the Church. The following examples will sustain this conclusion:—

Acts xiv. 23.

And when *they* had ordained for them elders in every Church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they had believed.

Acts xv. 2.

“*The Brethren* determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the Apostles and Elders about this question.”

By these passages it is clear that appointments to offices and to service were made *by the Church*.

It will be observed that the word “Elders” is in the plural, there being no such practice in the time of the Apostles as *one man* taking the government and ministry of a Church.

The Apostles, no doubt, exercised a powerful influence in the deliberations of the Churches. Even they, however, did not over-rule the Church, but obtained the judgment of their brethren by means of arguments addressed to their understanding, and directed by that Spirit who was to guide them into all truth. If Apostles accepted direction from the Church much more may we regard authority of members of the Church as supreme.

#### THE SCRIPTURES AND THE MINISTRY.

So much then for the Scriptural view of self-government in the Church, and now I ask your attention to



the Scriptural view of the Ministry. On this question our fathers accepted and we have followed the lead of the Society of Friends. It is true, that in the New Testament as in the Old, the principal is laid down that those who preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel; but we maintain that this refers to evangelists, to those who go about from place to place, who cannot therefore be engaged in business or have settled occupations. Now what say the Scriptures on these points; to the law and the testimony.

Matt. x. 8, 9, 10.

“Freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no scrip *for your journey* : neither two coats, nor shoes, nor yet staves; for the workman is worthy of his meat.”

Luke x. 7.

“And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire.”

It is obvious, therefore, that the “labourer” mentioned as “worthy of his hire” has no fixed abode, but is an apostle or evangelist, journeying from place to place. *We* have called out brethren, and without inducements being held out to them, they have entered upon evangelistic work, trusting to God through the Churches of the Union for their maintenance. In this matter we attach very great importance to the practice and precepts of the Apostle Paul himself. What does he say himself, and what is said of him?



Acts xviii. 3.

“And because Paul was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought; for by their occupation they were tent-makers.”

Acts xx. 17, 28, 34, 35.

“And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to the elders of the Church.” And said:

“Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God.

“Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

“I have showed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

These passages show that Paul maintained himself by working at his own trade, and he enjoined the elders to follow his example in this respect. Indeed, it is obvious that much of this address by Paul, as well as other utterances by the Apostle, is designed to prevent those ministering the Word allowing themselves to be chargeable to the Church, the speaker urging in the strongest manner that they should maintain themselves, and also “feed the Church of God.”

Acts vi. 2-6.

The appointment of seven Deacons in charge of temporal affairs (relief of widows and the poor) is some-



times quoted in justification of a line of demarcation between the work of the Ministry and other Christian work, setting apart certain brethren for the more *secular* affairs of the Church; but on referring to verse 8 it will be found that Stephen, although appointed to "serve tables," was "full of faith and power," and did "great wonders and miracles among the people." And he was honoured to be the first on the illustrious roll of Christian martyrs.

#### RIGHT TO LIVE OF THE GOSPEL.

But does not Paul say, ministers have a right to live of the Gospel? Our answer is "yes." This refers to the evangelist: a brother going about from place to place as a herald of the Gospel. But Paul shows that whilst he had the right as an apostle or evangelist to live of the Gospel, yet he did not exercise his right.

I Cor. ix. 5, 14, 15, 18.

"Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as the apostles, and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?"

"Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."

"But I have used none of these things. . . ."

"What is my reward then? Verily that when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel."

I Thess. ii. 9.

"For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail,



for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.”

2 Thess. iii. 8, 9.

“ Neither did we eat any man’s bread for nought ; but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.

“ Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.”

Thus in addressing the elders at Ephesus, Paul admits no claim whatever for *them* to “live of the Gospel,” because they were residents at Miletus, and ought to maintain themselves. But in these passages addressed to the Corinthians and Thessalonians, Paul defends his right, as an apostle or evangelist “proclaiming” the Gospel, to be chargeable to them ; but *he did not exercise his right when he might have done*, so jealous was he lest the preaching of the Gospel became a matter of pecuniary consideration and gain, which Paul regarded as inimical to the spirit and success of the Gospel.

THE REVISED VERSION AND OUR PRINCIPLES.

[*Paper (abridged) read at Warrington, 1881.*]

It would be most unfair to judge with favour or otherwise the work of the Revision of the New Testament because it strengthens or weakens the position of a particular denomination. The truth must be held sacred, and we must follow wherever it leads. It is, therefore, a matter of considerable interest and importance to



know how the new Revision affects our distinctive principles. Does it indicate that any position we have taken up as a denomination is unsound? Or, is its tendency to confirm our views on the ministry and Church polity? I have to ask you to read with me a number of passages bearing on the subject; observe the alterations (indicated by CAPITAL LETTERS), and then consider whether the conclusions I shall draw from them are fair and legitimate.

THE LABOURER WORTHY OF HIS HIRE.

A.V.

Matth. x. 8, 9, 10.

R.V.

Freely ye have received, freely give. Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses. Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves, for the workman is worthy of his meat.

Freely ye received, freely give. GET you no gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses; no WALLET for your journey; neither two coats, nor shoes, nor staff; for the labourer is worthy of his FOOD.

Luke x. 7.

And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire.

And in THAT same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give; for the labourer is worthy of his hire.

Acts xiv. 23.

And when they had ordained them elders in every church and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they believed.

And when they had APPOINTED FOR them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord, on whom they HAD believed.

Acts xv. 2.

They determined that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.

The BRETHREN APPOINTED that Paul and Barnabas, and certain other of them, should go up to Jerusalem unto the apostles and elders about this question.



The term "ordained," often quoted as a justification for the "ordination" of ministers, disappears with the New Version, which shows that the original word simply means "appointed."

#### BISHOPS TO MAINTAIN THEMSELVES.

The next passages are of considerable importance.

A.V.

Acts xviii. 3.

R.V.

And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them, and wrought, for by their occupation they were tentmakers.

And because he was of the same TRADE, he abode with them, and they wrought; for by their TRADE they were tentmakers.

Acts xx. 17, 28, 34. 35.

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called the elders of the Church.

And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus, and called to him the elders of the Church.

Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the Church of God.

Take heed unto yourselves and to all the flock, IN the which the Holy Ghost hath made you BISHOPS, to feed the Church of God.

Yea, ye yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

Ye yourselves know that these hands ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me.

I have showed you all things, how that so labouring you ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

In all things I gave you an EXAMPLE how that so labouring ye ought to HELP the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He HIMSELF said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

The alteration of "Overseers" in the Old Version to "Bishops" in the New Version is worthy of note. Frequently, the point of this passage has been averted by the assertion that "Overseer" meant some inferior officer in the Church; but we now have it upon the



authority of the Revisers of the New Testament that this is not so, but that it was the "Bishops" whom Paul called upon to follow his example and labour for their own maintenance as he had done. Whether it was better to translate the word "Bishops," or, as the Revisers give it always in the margin, "Overseers," I am not prepared to say; but having decided to use the word "Bishop," I am glad they have been consistent, and inserted it in the above passage, for it is the heaviest blow that could be given to the Salaried System that even the Bishops should be required to maintain themselves.

#### RIGHT OF EVANGELISTS TO MAINTENANCE.

In the subjoined passages, Paul shows that whilst he had the right as an Apostle or Evangelist to live of the Gospel, yet he did not exercise his right.

A.V.      I Cor. ix. 5, 14, 15, 18.      R.V.

Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?

Even so hath the Lord ordained that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

Have we no right to lead about a wife **THAT IS A BELIEVER**, even as the rest of the Apostles, and the brethren of the Lord and Cephas?

Even so did the Lord ordain that they which **PROCLAIM** the Gospel should live of the Gospel.

#### PAUL'S PERSONAL EXAMPLE.

But I have used none of these things. . . . What is my reward then? Verily that, when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel of Christ without charge, that I abuse not my power in the Gospel.

But I have used none of these things. . . . What then is my reward? That when I preach the Gospel, I may make the Gospel without charge, so as **NOT TO USE TO THE FULL MY RIGHT** in the Gospel.



A.V.

1 Thess. ii. 9.

R.V.

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.

For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail: working night and day, that we might not BURDEN any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.

2. Thess. iii. 8, 9.

Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but wrought with labour and travail night and day that we might not be chargeable to any of you.

Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us.

Neither did we eat bread for nought at any man's HAND, but in labour and travail, working night and day, that we might not BURDEN any of you.

Not because we have not the right, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you that ye should IMITATE.

#### WHO MAY AND MAY NOT BE MAINTAINED.

It is important to note that the word "preach" is rendered "proclaim," showing that the idea is that of a herald going forth from place to place proclaiming the glad tidings of salvation. In other words, it is not the stated Bishops or Ministers of a Church who have a right to "live of the Gospel," it is the herald or Evangelist who journeys from place to place "proclaiming" the Gospel, and who under such circumstances cannot always maintain himself. The following passages add additional force to what has been said:—

A.V.

1 Tim. ii. 7.

R.V.

Whereunto I am ordained a preacher and an apostle.

Whereunto I was APPOINTED a preacher and an apostle.



A.V.

1 Tim. v. 17, 18.

R.V.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.

For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn. And The labourer is worthy of his reward.

Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labour in the word and in **TEACHING**.

For the Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox **WHEN** he treadeth out the corn. And, The labourer is worthy of his **HIRE**.

1 Tim. iii. 2, 3, 8.

A bishop then must be blameless, given to hospitality . . .  
 . . . not given to wine . . .  
 . . . not greedy of filthy lucre.

Likewise must the deacons be grave . . . . not greedy of filthy lucre.

The bishop therefore must be **WITHOUT REPROACH**, . . .  
 . . . temperate . . . given to hospitality . . . apt to teach . . . no lover of money.

Deacons in like manner must be grave . . . . not greedy of filthy lucre.

Titus i. 5.

Ordain elders in every city.

**APPOINT** elders in every city.

1. Pet. v. 1, 2, 3.

The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder.

Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.

Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

The elders therefore among you I exhort, who am a fellow elder.

**TEND** the flock of God which is among you, **EXERCISING** the oversight, not **OF** constraint, but willingly, according unto God; **NOR YET** for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind; neither as lording it over **THE CHARGE** allotted to you, but **MAKING YOURSELVES** ensamples to the flock.

The injunctions against being greedy of filthy lucre were given alike, it will be observed, to Deacons and to Bishops, showing that both were engaged in some kind



of trade or business, and both were warned against greediness of gain in following their usual avocations and pursuits.

#### SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS.

With the above passages before us, I think we are now in a position to answer the inquiry, How the Revision affects our Denominational Principles? And I think there can be no question but that our Connexional views are supported and strengthened by it. The New Version confirms and makes even clearer than the Authorised Version the following points:—

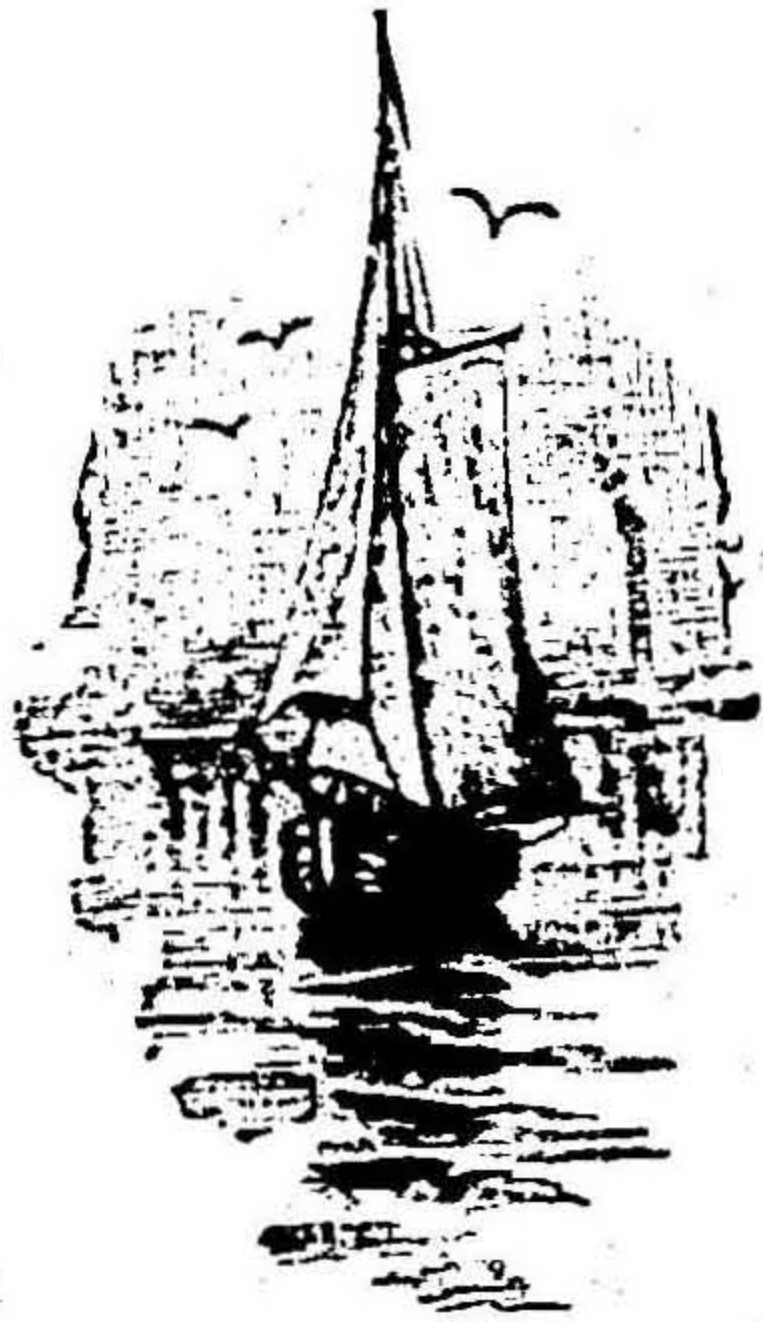
1. That Bishops, Elders, and others, who were Pastors and Ministers resident with Churches, were required to maintain themselves, and that the present practice of making a trade or profession as a stated and settled minister is wholly contrary to the teaching and spirit of the New Testament. This view is confirmed by the fact that Bishops and Elders were in the plural number in each Church, for as there were several in every Church it is obvious that they could not be salaried Ministers or Pastors. The Bishops and Elders not only maintained themselves, but gave of their means to support the Churches.

2. That the "labourer" who has a right to "live of the Gospel" is he who journeys from place to place "proclaiming" the Gospel. In other words, it is the Evangelist, and not the stated and settled Minister, who has a right to maintenance.

3. That the centre of authority rested in the



Churches, and not in the Bishops or Elders. Doubtless the opinions of the Apostles and other officers would have great weight; but the Apostles themselves and the Bishops and others were subject to the direction of the Church.





## V. "LAY" AGENCY HISTORICALLY CONSIDERED.

[*Nelson, Salem, 1882.*]

There are some words common amongst us in a religious connection that we seem obliged to use, although having considerable distaste for them. For example, I am not ashamed of being a Dissenter, but I dislike the word Dissenter, and I should hail with great satisfaction the day when—without changing our opinions, of course—we might cease to be Dissenters. In a similar spirit I dislike the word "Layman,"\* and I think I can give a good reason for this. When man had not direct and immediate access to God, when the way of mercy and peace was through the daily sacrifice and the annual atonement, there was then ground and reason for the distinction between Priest and People; but when the Great High Priest came, and offered Himself once for all, the middle wall of partition was broken down, the human priesthood was disestablished, the veil of the

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Dr. Parker, commenting in the *Christian Commonwealth* (June, 1883) upon the title of the London Congregational "Lay" Preachers' Association says:—We are really touched by the way in which they do honour to the ministerial office by carefully denominating themselves "Lay" preachers. Never will we say it of them. Preachers they are to us, one and all. In the evangel is neither Clerical nor Lay. In Independency the words have never once been used, the invidious distinction is abhorred. Prelacy and Presbyterianism have found it necessary to distinguish between different orders of evangelists, but the Gospel does not. Let the illomened word "Lay" remain in the custody of the clergy who invented it. We cannot possibly call our brethren Lay Preachers, for, if we did, somebody would begin to call us Clerical Preachers.



temple was rent in twain, and universal man was invited to enter with boldness into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and every believer in Christ became a Priest unto God.

#### LAY AGENCY IN THE APOSTOLIC AGE.

The New Testament carries us forward until nearly the close of the first century, and during all that period, and for a long time after, there were no distinctions between Priest and People, Clergy or Laity, Reverend or Layman. In that age every member of the Church possessing gifts was called to personal service for Christ; and it is an undeniable fact that, when the Church trusted wholly to what is now called Lay Agency; she was then most aggressive and progressive; and in its glorious march from Jerusalem to Rome the Gospel won its grandest triumphs.

#### LAY AGENCY ADAPTED TO OUR TIMES.

Now, we are asked whether Lay Agency is adapted to the times? A sufficient answer to that question is to be found in the fact that our Lord and His Apostles sent the Gospel chariot out into the world on the lines of Lay Agency. But what does the age want? If the age wants a state of things in which Christian men may recline at ease in comfortably cushioned pews, enjoying artistically-constructed sermons which have exhausted the talents and energy of the preacher for a whole week to prepare, and which are so rich with the wealth of human intellect, and so adorned with the grace of cultured speech, that the Word of God sounds poor and



common-place compared with the sermon—if that is what the age wants, then Lay Agency is not adapted to the times. But I doubt whether that is the want of the age. What are the indications as to the want of the age? I read the other day that one hundred gentlemen from all parts of the country had been conferring together how they may best promote the work of God; and they have sought assistance. But they have not solicited the help of the Archbishop of Canterbury. They have not even asked for the services of distinguished and cultured ministers in any of the great denominations. They have sought the assistance of a humble layman, Mr. Moody, who, under God, has been instrumental in the conversion of thousands, and in building up the Churches everywhere. And I have observed, also, that Rectors and other Clergymen who want their Churches roused from spiritual torpor have more faith in a visit from the Salvation Army, with their banners of “Blood and Fire,” than they have in a sight of those lawn sleeves which create such an imposing display in the House of Lords. Well, if these be indications of the spirit of the age, if the age desires Pentecost again, if the age yearns after victories of the Cross as in Apostolic days, then we must go back to the lines of Apostolic agency, when in the words of John Milton, “the ministry of the Word was open to all believers.”

#### SUCCESS PROPORTIONATE TO LAY AGENCY.

Now, I venture to state a proposition, which I believe will be found to rest upon an incontrovertible basis of his-



torical truth, and it is this : that whenever and wherever, in any age or any country, Lay Agency has been restricted, held down or suppressed, religion has declined and run down to a low ebb; and the converse of that is true—whenever and wherever, in any age or any country, Lay Agency has been extensively employed, there has been a revival of religion, the Word of God has been quick and powerful, and the Church has had large accessions to her numbers.

#### ROMAN CATHOLICS AND LAY AGENCY.

Now, there was a time in this country when Lay Agency was suppressed altogether, and when no man durst, at the peril of his life, tell his neighbours the glad tidings of the Gospel. Salvation through the Priest alone was the law. Lay Agency was completely extinguished, and the Priestly System was in the plenitude of its power, when one of the darkest days in the religious life of England came, and on April 4th, 1519, six men and a woman in Warwickshire were put to death for teaching their children to repeat the Lord's Prayer.

#### LAY AGENCY UNDER THE REFORMATION.

The Reformation brought partial deliverance from the priestly fetters; Bibles were placed in churches where people might resort; and little children, Juvenile Lay Agents, read to listening groups of men and women the words of eternal life. And "the word of the Lord was precious in those days." Bloody Mary came, and



with her the priestly curse. Once more Lay Agency was suppressed; the priest alone dispensed the truth, and religion was thrown back. Queen Elizabeth restored Protestantism, and in the preface to the Bible she is styled that "bright occidental star;" but although a Protestant, Elizabeth was a Pope. She was a deadly enemy to Lay Agency, and would permit none to preach save those who were ordained.

#### LAY AGENCY DURING THE COMMONWEALTH.

The Ministry of the Word continued to be the exclusive monopoly of the clergy until the great struggle which overthrew the Monarchy. Cromwell's Revolution was religious as well as political. Lay Agency then acquired a degree of freedom it had never before enjoyed in England; there had never been so much preaching, so much reading the Word of God and so much public worship as in the days of the Commonwealth. The Parliamentary Army took possession of the pulpits of the land and distributed the Word of Life freely to the people. Now, whether you compare the Parliamentary Army with the Royalist Army, or contrast the general religious condition of the country during the Commonwealth with that which went before or with that which followed immediately after, it redounds alike to the glory of God and the credit of Lay Agency. It is admitted on all hands that the people were more virtuous, that their language was purer, their manners and amusements were more elevated; those centres of vice, the theatres,



were closed, and honest trade and commerce ruled, for there were no bankrupts.

#### LAY AGENCY IN EARLY METHODISM.

The Restoration again put Lay Agency under a cloud, and there it remained, with all the sad effects of spiritual declension, until brought into sunshine again by Wesley; and what wonders the Founder of Methodism achieved by Lay Agency let the records of the Methodist Ecumenical Conference tell.\* It seemed at that great Methodist Council that representatives had come from all ends of the earth, and from every nation and tribe, in order to pay their tribute to the mighty power of the Gospel under Lay Agency. And, indeed, it is one of the glorious features of Lay Agency that it is adapted to every age and every clime.

#### LAY AGENCY IN SCOTLAND AND WALES.

I have spoken of great revivals of religion in conjunction with great revivals of Lay Agency in this country; but the facts are not confined to England. We are accustomed to look at Scotland as holding front rank in educational and religious progress; and no student of the subject will deny that these results are largely due to the marvellous exertions of the host of Lay Agents who were roused to apostolic fervour by the mighty eloquence of John Knox. Wales is not a whit behind the rest of the kingdom in religious

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\*See Methodist Ecumenical Conference and Lay Agency.



zeal, and this is in no small degree owing to the burning zeal of the noble band of laymen whose hearts were fired with holy sacrifice by Howell Harris.

#### LAY AGENCY IN AMERICA AND ELSEWHERE.

And passing from Great Britain to the effect of Lay Agency in distant parts of the world, the American representatives at the Methodist Council could find no language in which to sufficiently express their gratitude and admiration for the results of Lay Agency under Philip Embury ; and missionaries from all parts of the world—India, China, and elsewhere—re-echo the testimony of John Williams, the Erromango martyr, who said : “It is the native agents that do the work.” The sum and substance of all this testimony is this—that wherever and whenever, in any age or country, Lay Agency has been suppressed, religion has declined ; and wherever and whenever employed on a large scale, it has in a remarkable degree been accompanied by the power of God unto salvation.

#### PAID AGENCY UNEQUAL TO THE WORLD'S CONVERSION.

But I feel I must for a moment go further, and say it is impossible for the design of Christianity to be carried out on any other system than Lay Agency. What does Christianity aim at? The conversion of the world. Now that means to-day the conversion of 1,300,000,000 of people ; and while the Churches are making some progress, they are not doing so proportionately to the increase of the world's population. Even the most



aggressive of the great denominations, the Methodist body, finds it difficult to hold its own, and to keep up existing Church machinery. But if all the financial resources of the Churches are exhausted in maintaining the ground won, how is the world to be brought to Christ? If the prevailing system of a Paid Agency were to be extended on a scale requisite to make an impression upon the world's population, millions of money would be required where only thousands are spent; but if the thousands scarcely come into the treasury, how are the millions to be had? It is plain that for the world's conversion some agency must come in whereby, without vastly increasing expense, you may enormously increase the number of Christian workers. Such a resource is to be had in Lay Agency. It is not limited by want of funds. Practically it is unlimited.

#### APOSTOLIC MEANS REQUIRED FOR APOSTOLIC SUCCESS.

What is wanted is that the Church universal should change her attitude towards Lay Agency. Instead of making the Paid Agency the basis of her operations, and calling in Lay Agency only where it cannot be avoided, the Church should make Lay Agency the basis of her operations, utilize it to the utmost limit, and call in Paid Agency only where it cannot be avoided. As in Apostolic times, every Christian should regard himself as responsible for the propagation of the truth. Let the weight which presses down Lay Agency be removed; let the prejudice against Lay Agency, inherited from Roman Catholicism, transmitted by Mother



Church, and foolishly fostered by too many Nonconformists, be cleared away; let Lay Agency be charged with the responsibility of advancing the Gospel; let it be seen that no man can serve God by paying another to do his work, but that every Christian must render Personal Service, then will rise thousands of Christian workers where there are now only hundreds, the gifts of the whole Church will be impounded for Christ, and man, having employed Apostolic means, God will grant Apostolic success.





## VI.—A FREE CHURCH AND A FREE MINISTRY.

[*Sunderland, 1883.*]

I esteem it a very great privilege to be permitted to address an assembly such as this, more particularly because it probably comprises members of different religious denominations; but it is a privilege which brings with it no small responsibility. In addressing our own friends exclusively, we are apt at times to become a little dogmatic; whilst in a mixed audience, composed of persons of diverse views, we are bound to be deferential to convictions at variance with our own. But whatever varieties of opinion may exist among us as regards Church polity or systems and methods of action in Christian work, it is no small satisfaction to know that in the essential truths of the common salvation we are agreed, and that in the great doctrines which spring out of the incarnation, life, death, resurrection and ascension of our Lord we are at one.

### RELATION TO METHODISM.

But I think I may carry this definition of the harmony and agreement between ourselves and other religious bodies much further. I think there is more agreement in essential principles and modes of action between ourselves and leading Nonconformist Churches than is understood, or than might on the first glance seem to be the case. Let us look for a moment at the distinctive features of one or two leading religious denominations.



If we turn to Methodism, and enumerate those vital characteristics which have been her chief distinction and her glory, we share them. We have her simple, spiritual form of worship, her lively singing, her faithful preaching, her private means of grace—love-feasts, band meetings, class meetings, and prayer meetings, and her public methods of seeking to reclaim the lost by the proclamation of Gospel truth. In fact, in everything essentially Methodistic we are Methodists.

#### RELATION TO CONGREGATIONALISM.

Or, if we turn to another important and influential section of the Christian Church, the Congregationalists, with whom for the purpose of this argument we may ally the Baptists, we resemble them also. It is the pride and glory of Congregationalists or Independents to have established, after centuries of heroic struggles, the right of every Christian community to self-government, independent of Hierarchy, Synod, or Conference. Well, the polity, which Congregationalists have made such noble sacrifices to secure we enjoy to its fullest extent; and if you will unite those two representative ideas, Methodism and Congregationalism, you will have a clearer idea of the root out of which has sprung the denomination whose 78th anniversary we are celebrating. And allow me to remark, by the way, that this is a combination which you find nowhere else, outside this denomination. You can have Methodism by itself elsewhere, and you can have Congregationalism or self-governed Churches; but the two combined—the spiritual



fire and enthusiasm of Methodism, and the liberty-loving polity of Congregationalism—you can only have in this denomination. I present the union of these two important elements as an ample justification for our independent existence as a branch of the Church of Christ.

NO CLERICAL ORDERS NOR TITLES.

But I am quite aware that we have another distinctive feature by which we are known from other Churches. Like that eminently respectable body of Christians, the Quakers, or Society of Friends, we have no clerical or ministerial order ; we have no “ rev. ” gentlemen amongst us, and none exclusively set apart and maintained as ministers, except those who go about from place to place as evangelists, and who, therefore, cannot earn a livelihood, and have a right to “ live of the Gospel. ”

OUR “ RAISON D’<sup>^</sup>ÊTRE. ”

Now, allow me to state as clearly as I can the philosophy of our position. We maintain that instead of some one man being chosen and set apart to live a holier life and to preach a purer truth than the rest of the Church, while a dozen or a score of men in the congregation allow their talents to rust unused, the work of the ministry should be distributed over all the gifted brethren in the Church. We hold that the Church and society generally would be the gainer if, instead of only one man being expected to live on the high moral and spiritual elevation required by the pulpit, there were a dozen or twenty in each Church so living ; that



the average moral and religious tone of the Church and of society would be raised were all the gifted men in the Church feeling themselves required to conform to the pulpit standard of holiness and spirituality.

#### MINISTRY UNPAID.

And from this basis there necessarily follows another proposition. If, in placè of One-man Ministry, you establish a ministry embracing all the most gifted and capable men in the Church, you necessarily abolish the financial basis of the clerical and ministerial system; for it is as much as the Churches can do to pay one man, and, therefore, to pay a dozen or twenty would be out of the question. Well, now, I hope by this time you see more clearly where we are. We are Methodists in all that concerns doctrine, public worship, and modes of action in spiritual work; we are Congregationalists or Independents as to our Church polity and form of government, the Chapel property and management of all its affairs being vested in the Church itself; while, as regards the ministry of the Church, it is thrown open to every capable brother called out by the Church, and because thus thrown open, it is an unpaid ministry.

#### RESUME OF ARGUMENT.

Now, when we were at Warrington a couple of years ago, I endeavoured to show, by reference more especially to the work of Professor Hatch, of Oxford, Bampton Lecturer, 1880, on the "Early Organization of the Christian Churches," that the ministry of the



Apostolic and Early Churches was of the character I have been describing. Last year, when we were at Nelson, I endeavoured to trace through several centuries the influence of exclusive and open systems of ministry, showing that wherever the ministry has been most rigidly confined to a class or order of men, there religion has decayed; but that when the ministry of the Gospel has been most widely extended over the Church, a revival of religion has been the result. I will not now go over that ground again, but there are one or two observations which I should like to make.

#### EFFECTS OF THE PAID SYSTEM.

In the first place, I think a really effective, sound, thorough, and faithful ministry cannot be reared on a financial basis. I do not mean that there are no successful and faithful ministers who are paid. There are plenty, and there are doubtless very many men in the Paid Ministry who really love the work, and who would continue in the ministry if their pay ceased to-morrow. But we are not referring to individuals; we are dealing with a system; and we contend that a system which exhibits the preaching of the Gospel as a profession or trade, which men may enter and by it earn a livelihood, does not honour the Gospel, and is out of harmony with its spirit of self-sacrifice. It is a well-known and generally recognised fact that there are thousands of clergymen and ministers who would never preach another sermon if their livings did not depend upon it. Now men who preach to live, who would not be clergymen and



ministers were it not for the living, can seldom or never lift themselves or the Gospel above mere professionalism. What is wanted for the advancement of the Gospel is true sympathy with and conformity to the disinterested and self-sacrificing spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ; and there is no proof of genuine disinterestedness in the ministry except that supplied by the Apostle Paul, who refused to be chargeable to anyone, lest his doing so should have the appearance of preaching the Gospel for personal gain. You cannot ensure a pure and perfectly disinterested ministry on a financial basis.

#### HINDRANCES OF ONE-MAN MINISTRY.

But I have another observation to make. We say that the One-man Ministry deprives the Church of her natural leaders in Christian work. I refer to men of wealth, position, and education. The system of a One-man Ministry teaches men of wealth and influence that when they have subscribed to set apart a man for the work of the Church they have done their duty and discharged their obligation to the extension of Christ's Kingdom. Hence, when a gentleman like the Mayor occupies the pulpit, there is a singularity surrounding the fact. His brother magistrates, aldermen, members of the town council, bankers, solicitors, and leading business men, do not feel under an obligation to enter their respective pulpits. Now, we say that if these gentlemen, instead of discharging their obligation by proxy, would cast their own personal energies into active Christian work, a vast improvement



would necessarily follow in the moral and religious tone of society and in the power of the Church to extend the Redeemer's Kingdom.

#### STATE OF THINGS IN METHODISM.

In a partial degree, the diffusion of the ministerial function is secured in Methodism; but only partially and under conditions which do not give the principle a fair trial. In Methodism you have on the one hand an educated and salaried ministry, and on the other hand the "local" preachers; but the rich and well-to-do class largely contribute to the salaries of the ministers, and console themselves with having done their duty by proxy; and for the most part the ranks of the local preachers are filled up by working men who are not deemed equal to the task of edifying educated congregations. Now, if the principle for which we are contending were adopted, wealthy, well-to-do, and educated Methodists would not have the excuse of paying another man; and the responsibility of sustaining the pulpit in Methodism would be cast, not only upon the present race of local preachers, but also upon her educated sons, who now sit idly in the pews, their talents buried in napkins. Press home that obligation, and thousands of gifted men, who now do not so much as move their little finger in Christian service, would be found heartily exerting themselves for the spread of the Gospel.

#### INSUFFICIENCY OF THE PAID SYSTEM.

One thing is quite clear, that unless the system for which we are contending is adopted, the great object on



which Christians have professedly set their hearts, and for which they daily pray, can never be accomplished—I mean the conversion of the world. How is it to be attempted? How much of the great task belongs to Methodism? 100,000,000? Methodists are thanking God for an addition to their numbers this year of 13,000; but if with all the machinery they have at work in Methodism they gain only 13,000, how are they to compass 100,000,000? How is the salvation of the world to be achieved at the rate its population is increasing? With our existing systems this is impossible; and I am glad to see signs that the impossibility is recognized, and that on many sides earnest men see the necessity for expanding and enlarging the basis of the Christian ministry.

#### PROPOSAL TO ORDAIN 7,000 UNPAID CLERGYMEN.

There was a remarkable discussion recently in the Convocation of York. Bishops, archdeacons, canons, and other Church dignitaries frankly acknowledged that the financial basis has failed to keep up a ministry proportioned to the growth of the population, and in Convocation it was boldly suggested that 7,000 unpaid clergymen should be ordained.

#### OXFORD MANIFESTO ON THE PRIESTHOOD OF BELIEVERS.

I wish to allude for a moment to another conspicuous sign of the times. Very recently a book has been published, dedicated to the University of Oxford, by



Canon Freemantle, a canon of Canterbury. It is entitled "The Gospel of Secular Life." But the book may be justly called an Oxford manifesto in favour of our principles. There is a chapter in that book with this significant title, "The Universal Priesthood of Believers." Canon Freemantle tells Oxford that sacerdotal systems have had their day and are passing away; he says that the limited priesthood of the leaders of public prayer is being exchanged for the universal priesthood of believers; and declares that, instead of trying to live men's lives for them, we must foster any original power developed in them.

#### DR. ALLON ON THE CHURCH OF THE FUTURE.

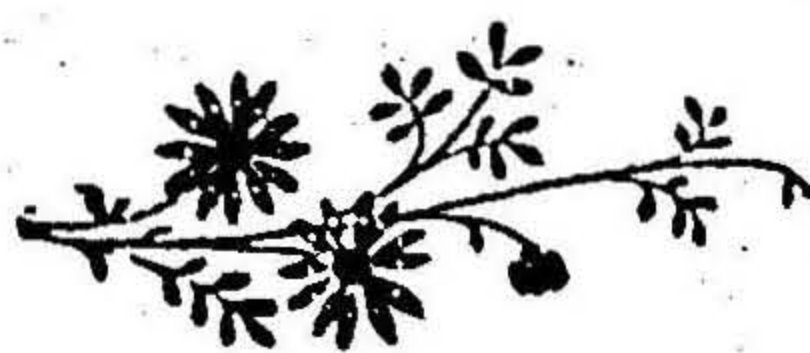
And this harmonizes with a sentiment uttered a short time ago by an eminent minister of the Congregational body at the Jubilee held at Manchester. Sketching the Church of the Future, Dr. Allon said: "The future will be with that Church which most fully recognizes the prerogatives and responsibilities of the individual religious man. . . . The final cause of all government is the perfection of the people—the priesthood of God. . . . If the ideal and consummation of religious life be the development of a perfect manhood, the Church of the future must be that which, employing most fully the discipline of spiritual freedom, realizes most perfectly the individual result. The end of all training is to make the pupil independent of the teacher, 'a law to himself.' "

#### OUR DUTY TO BE FAITHFUL.

With testimonies which prove that other religious



bodies see the necessity of removing the restrictions by which the Church has unwisely bound the ministry in the past, it is for us to take courage and go forward. When we see the existing financial basis of the ministry strained to breaking point, it is for us to maintain and to publish the example of an Open and Free Ministry. If it is not just now, the time will come when our testimony will be wanted. Earnest Christian men will long increasingly for means whereby the world outside may be reached; and we shall be able to suggest a solution of the problem by presenting a demonstration of how it is possible to carry on all the functions of a church on the open and free principle. We are gradually coming nearer the time when zealous Christians, longing for the salvation of the souls of their fellow men, will appreciate the greater field of usefulness and the enlarged freedom of action obtainable with a Free Church and a Free Ministry; and when it will be seen that the conversion of the world is only possible by the full recognition of the Universal Priesthood of Believers.





PART II.

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A PAPER

ON

The Title "REVEREND,"

AND

ADDRESSES

NOT PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED.



## VII. THE TITLE "REVEREND."

The word "Reverend" occurs once only in the Scriptures—"Holy and reverend is His name"—Ps. xi. 9; and on this an argument has been built up to the effect that as the word "Reverend" is one of the names of the Almighty it is irreverent to apply the name to man. Before any inference is drawn from this Scripture we must know something of the origin of the word in question, and be quite clear as to its translation.

It should be pointed out that the original word has not always been so translated. I have a copy of "Barker's Bible," printed in 1598, and there the passage is rendered "Holy and fearful is His name," and this translation is confirmed by other authorities. In his commentary, Barnes thus paraphrases the passage—"Holy and to be venerated; literally to be feared."

Anglicised from the French word "révérend," which is derived from the Latin "reverendus," the meaning conveyed by the word is that of being worthy of reverence, or entitled to respect and esteem, in which there is a mingling of fear and affection, honour and veneration.

### EARLY USE OF THE WORD "REVEREND."

In this broad sense, and without reference whatever to any particular class in the community, the word was used for some centuries. The term "reverend" was considered applicable to all persons worthy of



reverence, whether men or women. It was so used by Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and many others.

For example, the word is frequently so employed in the Paston Letters, written in the fifteenth century; Margaret Paston addressed John Paston as "right reverend and worshipful husband." In another letter appears the following: "Ladies and Gentlemen address each other by the title of reverend and right reverend. Servants address their Masters and Mistresses by the epithet reverend."

In Shakespeare, Dr. Caius, a physician, is referred to as "a most reverend gentleman"; Portia, a lawyer, is addressed "most reverend doctor;" in another passage "twenty reverend bishops" are mentioned, and the "right reverend Cardinal of York"; but the term is used as an ordinary adjective, and not specifically as a title. A "reverend youth" one character is denominated; while another is described as "old and reverend." "Reverend in conversation, gentle in condition" is a tribute to one; yet another is stigmatised by Shakespeare thus: "You stubborn, ancient, knave, you reverend braggart."

#### THE TITLE FIRST APPLIED TO JUDGES AND LAWYERS.

Curiously enough, when the word came to be applied to a particular class of society, it was not the Clergy in the first instance. From about the year 1580 to 1700, over one hundred years, the adjective was frequently applied to the Judges presiding over the Courts of the land, and to other men of eminence who were learned



in the law. In the year 1585, Sir William Stamford was spoken of as "Le très reverend Judge." In 1675 permission was given by the Court of Judges to print the cases collected by Sir Francis Moore and the title of the book was "A collection of the law cases by the Reverend and Learned Sir Francis Moore, late Sergeant at Law." It had then a legal and not a clerical application.

But after the Clergy and Ministers generally assumed the title, Judges and Lawyers ceased to be addressed by it.

#### HOW MINISTERS WERE ADDRESSED.

During the period when the term "reverend" was applied to Judges and Lawyers of distinction, Clergymen were addressed by other terms. Before and for some time after the Reformation the ordinary title of what is known as the Parochial Clergyman was "Sir," or "Mister," or "Master," the latter appellation belonging to those who had attained to the degree of Master of Arts.

Instances of this kind abound in Shakespeare. Among his dramatis personæ may be found a Welsh Parson, styled "Sir" Hugh Evans; a Curate, "Sir" Nathaniel; a Vicar, "Sir" Oliver Martext.

A conspicuous example of a distinguished Church dignitary being styled "Mr." was cited in the Law Courts a few years ago. In the inventory of vestments and other ornaments for the Cathedral Church of Lincoln, a cope, which had been given by Cardinal



Morton, then Archbishop of Canterbury, was described as having been given by "Mr. John Morton, Cardinal and Archbishop of Canterbury," proving without doubt that the word "Reverend" was not applied to the Clergy in the fifteenth century.

After the reign of Queen Elizabeth the use of the word "Sir" to the Clergy gradually died out, and "Master" or "Mr." became the general appellation by which they were addressed for a considerable time. We speak of Bishop Hooper; but in his lifetime he was spoken and written of as "Master" Hooper.

#### FIRST USE OF THE TITLE TO MINISTERS.

As far as I have been able to trace the history of the matter, the first instance in which the term "reverend" was distinctively applied to the Clergy is in the Act of Uniformity, passed in 1662—a legislative measure fraught with mischief to the Church and to religion in so many directions.

Singularly enough, Nonconformist Ministers, as a class, adopted the title "Reverend" quite as early as the Parochial Clergy of the Church of England. Evidence of this fact is found on the title pages of their works, and in documents presented to the Crown on various occasions. It may be that in the time of Dryden and Milton the way was being prepared for associating the word with Clergymen and Ministers. For Dryden uses the description, "an awful reverend and religious man," while Milton speaks of "a reverend sire," who "preached conversion and repentance."



But the general use of the title came about very slowly, and not without much opposition. Many zealous Protestants, both Churchmen and Nonconformists, strongly disapproved of it. There was a Papal ring about it which aroused their hostility. The way in which the practice of applying the title grew may be described as insidious. At first it was used of the dead. Exceptionally pious men were described in funeral eulogies as "reverend," the word being usually coupled with other terms descriptive of the qualities of the departed. The writings of a minister collected and published after his death were announced on the title page as the works of the "Rev. Mr. John——." The prefix "Rev." was followed by "Mr." and was regarded rather as an adjective than as a title. By-and-bye "Mr." was dropped, and "Rev." then appeared as a title.

But so far the use of the word was intended to express reverence for the dead. The application of the term to living persons, whether Church of England Clergymen or Nonconformist ministers, was a more contentious matter, and was frequently objected to. There are cases on record of parish registers, where a clergyman has used the title in making entries. Afterwards the prefix "Rev." has been struck out as objectionable by some later pen.

A noteworthy case arose at Exeter, where on the gravestone of a Unitarian minister were placed these words—"Here lies the reverend, learned and pious Mr. James Pierce." The word is not used here as a



title but as a tribute. But the Rector disallowed and caused the removal of the inscription, declaring that Mr. Pierce was "not reverend because he was not lawfully ordained; that he was not learned because he had not been educated at a University; and he was not pious, because he taught doctrinal errors."

A correspondent of the *Times* some years ago, approaching the subject from its antiquarian side, wrote: "The word 'Reverend' was often applied to learned and pious clergymen during the 17th century on the pages of collected works, but of the employment of the word during life there is no earlier example than the middle or early part of the 18th century."

#### THE TITLE PROHIBITED BY WESLEYAN CONFERENCE.

Coming to a later period, when John Wesley died in 1791, a somewhat mixed state of things prevailed with regard to the Ministry among "the people called Methodists." There were three classes of Ministers in the denomination:—First, those who had been ordained in the Church of England; second, those who had been ordained by Wesley; and third, Ministers who had not been ordained at all. Afterwards, a fourth class was added, those who received ordination at the hands of Ministers who had themselves been ordained by Wesley.

But the third class, those who had not been ordained at all, greatly preponderated, and ever since the change in his views on this subject wrought by the episode of Thomas Maxwell, Wesley had regarded favourably



devoted helpers of this class. He was truly described on the first tablet in City Road Chapel-yard as "the patron and friend of lay preachers"—words since obliterated and others substituted. Wesley frequently warned his "preachers" against assuming the title of Ministers.

Wesley's views on this matter were largely shared by the Methodist leaders and people generally. So pronounced was this sentiment at the period referred to, that two years after his death, *i.e.*, in 1793, the Conference resolved that no gowns, cassocks, bands or surplices should be worn by any preacher, that the title "Reverend" should not be used by them towards each other in future, and that the distinction between "ordained" and "unordained" ministers should thenceforward be dropped.

This resolution was confirmed at the following Conference, and remained in force until 1811, when the rule as to non-user of the title "Reverend" was rescinded, since which time it has been commonly accorded to those set apart from the ordinary professions and occupations of life for the service of the Ministry.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TITLE.

The use of the term has no warrant in Scripture, nor can any example be cited of its use by or towards Ministers of the Gospel for nearly seventeen centuries of the Christian era. But it is now very generally used among the Churches, Established and Nonconformist alike, with the exception of the Society of



Friends, ourselves, the Irvingites, and some other denominations. Before dealing with objections to the practice, it may be desirable that we should endeavour to understand and clearly recognize the meaning attached to the word by very many who use the prefix "Reverend."

It should be borne in mind that numbers of Ministers who claim the title would as strongly as ourselves disclaim any ecclesiastical or priestly superiority for their ministry over our own. It is claimed by many who are vehement in their denunciation of Sacerdotalism in every form and shape. Their defence, or the reason they advance for the use of the title, is that it is a convenient form of expression distinguishing those wholly devoted to the ministry from those who preach the Gospel, but are also engaged in professions or business avocations. There are doubtless many others who regard both clerical title and dress as outward indications that they belong to an ecclesiastical, if not priestly, order, and are in some way more authoritatively ambassadors of God than the tradesman and artizan, the tent-maker and fisherman, who preaches the Gospel.

#### BANEFUL INFLUENCE OF THE TITLE.

That clerical titles are largely instrumental in fostering and accentuating the distinction between "Ministers" and "Laymen" is undeniable. Even if Ministers are disposed to disclaim any superiority of order or caste, in many cases their congregations are



otherwise minded. In many Methodist pulpits a "local" is not tolerated; nor is a "layman" in Congregationalist pulpits; and where he is tolerated, his ministry is regarded as of a subordinate, if not inferior, character. If he were an archangel and if he worked at a carpenter's bench or at any trade, as did the Lord Jesus Christ and Paul and other Apostles, many modern congregations would decline to accept his ministry.

Now the mischief of this prejudice and its hindrance to the success of the work of the Gospel have been so forcibly stated by Dr. R. W. Dale, of Birmingham, the distinguished and revered Congregationalist Minister and Author, that I cannot more effectively present the case against the use of clerical titles than in his own words.

#### WHY DR. DALE DISCARDED THE TITLE.

In an article specially devoted to the subject, published in the Congregationalist Magazine, November, 1874, and headed, "Why I ceased to use the title 'Reverend,'" Dr. Dale describes the growth and progress of his conviction on the subject, and states the grounds upon which he desired its abandonment in the interest of the Church and the success of the Gospel.

He had promised to take part in some public services at a prosperous Church in Birmingham whose Pastor was an Architect, who was not educated for the ministry, who did not wear a white tie, and whose wife might not recognize his name were the prefix



“Reverend” to it. “He was announced as ‘Mr. George ——’; my name appeared as the ‘Rev. R. W. Dale.’ The difference,” says Dr. Dale, “struck me. I did not like it. Did the ‘Rev.’ before my name mean that Society acknowledged me as a Christian Minister? The architect was just as good a Minister as I was; why was not he ‘Rev.’ too? I had no mysterious power that he did not possess—no higher authority than belonged to him; why was I the ‘Rev.’ and he ‘Mr.’? For him to be ‘Rev.’ was impossible. If he were to put ‘Rev.’ on his card, a gentleman building a warehouse would never think of asking him for plans; and, indeed, if he called *himself* ‘Rev.’ Society would refuse him the title. There was no solution to be found in that direction.

“Then I came to the conclusion that the distinction drawn by ‘Society’ between him and me was likely to affect, if not the judgment yet the imagination and sentiment of the Church; that the fact that I was called ‘Rev.’ and he ‘Mr.’ might be associated in the minds of even some members of his own congregation with the feeling that, in some sense, I was more truly a Minister of Christ and of the Church of Christ than he. It seemed to me that this title, conceded to myself and refused to the architect, might be one of the innumerable influences which strengthen the reluctance of congregations to elect as their pastor a man engaged in a trade or profession. The grocer, the draper, the farmer, the solicitor, cannot be a ‘Rev.’ while he continues to follow his business; and congregations



have," continues Dr. Dale, "the feeling that somehow not to have 'Rev.' for their minister is irregular, and derogatory to their dignity. . . ."

"I cherish the hope of a time when, in proportion to the number of Church members, the number of men separated from secular occupations and devoted altogether to spiritual duties will be much less than at present. I doubt whether any perfect solution is possible of financial difficulties, so long as Churches are unwilling to elect tradesmen and professional men to the pastorate. There will always probably be need of a considerable number of ministers specially trained in theological studies, and liberated from the cares of business ; but, in a thoroughly healthy condition of the Church, such ministers ought not to be necessary for every separate congregation of Christians. In two cases immediately under my own eye in Birmingham, lay-pastorates have proved a real and enduring success. I want to see them greatly multiplied."

The circumstances under which Dr. Dale was led to consider the subject brings into prominence one of the root objections to clerical titles. I refer to the prevailing custom which records social rank to the preacher styled "Reverend," which is denied the preacher of the same Gospel not so styled. Dr. Dale inquired from the Pastor of an Irvingite Congregation—who was foreman in a Pen Manufactory—whether he was in orders or how he was to be addressed.

AN IRVINGITE PASTOR'S REASONS AGAINST THE TITLE.

"Yes, I am in orders and have been for some time,"



was the reply of the Pen Foreman and Irvingite Pastor. "I am the angel of the Church here. But don't address me as 'Reverend.' You Congregationalists and Baptists maintain that the ministers of the Church of Christ should receive no endowments from the State, and that they should not be invested as ministers with any political distinctions. You do not approve of making Bishops peers of the realm because they are Bishops; you want to exclude them from the House of Lords. *We* go further. We say that the ministers of the Church of Christ should neither claim nor receive as Ministers any *social* distinctions. What *you* say should not be done by the law and usage of the State, *we* say should not be done by the law and usage of Society. Ecclesiastical office confers no title to political dignity and power; nor does it confer any title to 'social position.' Among us the Ministers of the Church belong to every social rank. Some of them are peers, some of them are cobblers. We do not think that their social rank should be affected by their ecclesiastical office. We cannot ask Society to confer a title of courtesy on a man because the Church has invested him with spiritual functions, any more than we can ask the State to confer a title of nobility upon him for the same reason. We take position in the Church, not according to our social rank, but according to our ecclesiastical office. Outside the Church our ecclesiastical office confers no claim to social position. The cobbler is a cobbler to the world, and the peer is a peer to the world, whatever he may be to us."



DISTINCTION BETWEEN CLERICAL TITLES AND  
EDUCATIONAL DEGREES.

It must be admitted that Dr. Dale was correct in characterizing the reply of the workman Pastor as full of good sense. The objection to the use of clerical titles had led some people to the extreme view that no titles of any description should be used, although such titles, as in the case of Educational Degrees, may represent actual attainments of real worth. Dr. Dale has clearly set forth the difference between the two things in the following passage :—

“ When I put M.A. after my name, I am not asking Society to concede me any ‘ position ’ on the ground of ecclesiastical office ; but to recognize the fact that a chartered corporation, empowered by the State to grant diplomas on an examination of literary attainments, has granted me the diploma represented by the letters. It is a mere piece of red ribbon in my button-hole, worn for the same reason for which a man wears any other title which the State or a chartered representative of the State confers.

“ But you are asserting your superiority to your lay friends by using your title of M.A. just as much as by using the title of Reverend ; this is objected to. The objection shows that the grounds on which the title of ‘ Rev. ’ is given up are not understood. In this small matter of having passed a University examination, I *am* superior to my two ministerial friends who are in business ; but I am not superior to them in my right to be recognized as a minister of the Church of Christ.



If I call myself the Rev. R. W. Dale, M.A., half the difference between my description and theirs—the M.A.—represents a fact, though the fact is not one of any great importance; but the other half of the difference—the ‘Rev.’—suggests a most pernicious fiction.”

OPINION OF CHARLES H. SPURGEON.

But the late Dr. Dale was not the only leading Minister who discarded the clerical title. The most popular Minister of our time, who being dead yet speaketh—Charles Haddon Spurgeon—was vehement almost to the verge of impatience with the prefix “Reverend.” Arriving at the same conclusion as Dr. Dale, his method of treatment is different. Dr. Dale digs deep into the heart of the matter and lays the foundation of a sound conviction. Mr. Spurgeon brings into play all the forces of satire, and all the armoury of humorous ridicule.

“It seems rather odd to us,” says Mr. Spurgeon, “that a man should print upon his visiting card the fact that he is a *reverend* person. Why does he not occasionally vary the term and call himself estimable, amiable, talented or beloved? Would this seem odd? Is there any solid objection to such a use of adjectives after the fashion is once set by employing the word *reverend*? If a man were to assume the title of *reverend* for the first time in history, it would look ridiculous, if not presumptuous or profane. Why does not the Sunday School teacher call himself respectable John Jones; or the city missionary dub himself ‘hard working William



Evans?' Why do we not, like the members of the secret orders, go in for Worthy Masterhips and Past Grands and the like?

#### THE TITLE WITHOUT MERIT.

“It may be said that the title of Reverend is only one of courtesy; but then, so was the title of Rabbi among the Jews; yet the disciples were not to be called Rabbi. It is, at any rate, a suspicious circumstance that among mankind no class of persons should so commonly describe themselves by a pretentious title as the professed ministers of the lowly Jesus. Peter and Paul were right reverend men, but they would have been the last to have called themselves so. No sensible person does reverence us one jot the more because we assume the title. It certainly is in some cases a flagrant misnomer, and its main use seems to be the pestilent one of keeping up the unscriptural distinction of Clergy and Laity. A lad, fresh from the College, who has just been placed in the pulpit, is the Reverend Smith; while his eminently godly grandfather, who has for fifty years walked with God and is now ripe for Heaven, has no such claim to reverence.

“REVS. PAUL, APPOLLOS, AND CEPHAS.”

“A gentleman of ability, education, and eminent piety preaches in various places with much zeal and abundant success, but he is no Reverend; while a man of meagre gifts, whose principal success seems to be in scattering the flock, wears the priestly prefix, having a



name to be revered, when he commands no esteem whatever. This may be a trifle; many, no doubt, so regard it; why, then, are they not prepared to abstain from it? The less value of the epithet, the less reason for continuing the use of it. It would be hard to say who has the right to it, for many use it who have not been pastors for years, and have not preached a sermon for many a day. What on earth are they to be revered for? Other men are always preaching, and yet no one calls them Reverend, why not? The distribution of this wonderful honour is not fairly arranged.

“We suggest,” continues Mr. Spurgeon, “that as the wife is to see that she reverences her husband, every married man has a degree of claim to the title Reverend, and the sooner all Benedicts exercise the privilege, the sooner will the present clerical use of it pass out of fashion. We wonder when men first sought out this invention, and from whose original mind did the original sin emanate? We suspect that he lived in the Roman Row of Vanity Fair, although the Rev. John Bunyan does not mention him. One thing is pretty certain, he did not flourish in the days of the Rev. Paul, or the Rev. Appollos, or the Rev. Cephas.”





## VIII.—THE MERITS OF LAY AGENCY.

[*Colne, 1887.*]

I have been asked to speak to you this evening on "The Merits of Lay Agency," a subject which I have felt my spirit in a state of rebellion against ever since I received notice of it. And for this reason, that I do not believe in "Lay" agency. I neither believe in Clericalism on the one hand, nor in Laymanism on the other. I believe in the Universal Priesthood and in the Spiritual Kingship; and, as it appears to my mind, any man having a true conception of the dignity and grandeur of the Sonship of God, and of the exalted privilege of being a brother and co-worker with the Lord Jesus Christ—any man who realizes the glorious privileges into which we were introduced when the divine power of the dying Christ on the Cross rent the veil of the Temple, will freely and readily say, Let all class and caste distinctions disappear as we enter into the Holy of Holies through the blood of Jesus. But while I dissent from it, the phrase "Lay Agency" is one in common use, and is to some extent well understood, and carries with it a definite idea. It is not the only instance of the common use of a phrase not strictly correct. It is a long time since Galileo proved that the sun stands still and the world moves; but we still ascribe the daily alternation of light and darkness to the rising and setting of the sun; and so although the use of the phrase among us may be somewhat illogical, it



appears likely that for some time to come we shall continue to use the phrase "Lay Agency."

#### DEFINITION OF LAY AGENCY.

But now, what is meant by Lay Agency? What do others mean by it? What do we mean by it? I observe that some members of the Established Church are finding it a very hard task to draw the line where Clericalism ends and Laymanism begins. A Lay friend of mine, who is a member of the Church of England, was recently ordained, and his admirers find themselves much perplexed as to the style in which they should now address him. He preaches in their pulpits on the Sunday, but on the Monday he is at the Mill, and on the Tuesday on the Exchange. Hitherto a Layman has only read the lessons in the Church. But this friend of mine mounts the pulpit and preaches the sermon, being ordained. Must he be styled "Rev.," or still plain "Mr.?" Many of my friend's followers are puzzled, being unable to decide whether he is really a minister of the Gospel or not. In many respects these distinctions are mischievous, and even grotesque. In such a case it is assumed that a Layman may perform functions which influence the immortal spirit in man; but the ordinances of the Church are the exclusive right of the Clergy. The Layman, for example, may lead the soul to Christ, and in the dying hour help to guide the incorruptible spirit to the eternal world; but he must not on any account read a psalm or offer a prayer when the corruptible body is being laid in the earth.



## CLAIM OF MINISTERIAL POWER.

But I observe also that an eminent minister of the Wesleyan body, Dr. Rigg, has been drawing the line between the function of the Minister and of the Layman. In a book written by him, and recently published, if I understand him correctly, he lays it down as the prerogative of the Minister, as distinguished from the Layman, that he holds the keys of the spiritual kingdom on earth; and whom the Minister receives is received, and whom he rejects is rejected. And this is told us near the close of the nineteenth century, a time when democratic principles reign in every department of life! Now, Lay Agency, as we understand it, would abolish all distinctions of Priestly, Clerical, and Ministerial assumption; and would place the duty and responsibility of carrying on the Work of God upon the whole Church of God, requiring from each member service according to his talents, but making it the bounden duty of every Christian to personally render service for Christ. That is the broad definition which we give of Lay Agency.

## OUR ASPECT OF THE CHURCH.

In examining the merits of Lay Agency, we must ask ourselves what is the object we have in view. Do we look upon our Churches as so many nurseries where never growing babes are fed on spiritual things; or as hospitals where treatment is provided for never cured soul sickness; or as palaces of ease, where saints may enjoy serene repose, and "sit and sing themselves away



to everlasting bliss?" If these be our ideas of what Churches should be, then Lay Agency possesses for us no merits whatever. But if we look upon Churches as God's workshops, where work is done for God, and fresh workers learn to work for God; or as training schools where soldiers prepare themselves to fight against and resist sin and evil, and to advance all that is good, then Lay Agency has great merits. What is our view of the world, and of life, and of destiny? Do we look upon them as Christ did? Do we look upon the world as a lost world, and are we each saying—"I will be a Jesus, helping to redeem a lost world from the curse of sin?" If so, then in Lay Agency we shall find sources of power and blessing hitherto undreamt of for their capabilities of good.

#### ITS EFFECTIVENESS FOR THE GOSPEL.

Now, I wish, in the first place, to say that Lay Agency, by laying upon every Christian the responsibility of engaging personally in the service of Christ, establishes the most effective means for the propagation of the Gospel, and consequently for the conversion of the world to Christ. Clear as this proposition may appear to us, there are millions of men and women, even in Christian England, who do not recognize its force and obligation, and do not see that they have any duty in relation to it. I was forcibly impressed with this thought a short time ago. Special services were being held at a Church belonging to the Establishment in Bolton. Scores were deeply moved by the appeals of



the Missioner, and remained to the after-meeting. Many were weeping on account of sin and seeking Christ; but there was no one to speak to them. The work of God's Spirit was so widespread the preacher could not deal with all the cases. One of our own friends said to a prominent official of the Church—"Had you not better speak to some of these people, and help them?" The reply was, "Oh, no; that is the work of the clergyman." Here were persons in great numbers seeking mercy, and a leading official of this Church thought none should speak of Christ to sinners except ordained clergymen. There are millions of Christian men who admit the responsibility, but think they can discharge it by proxy—by paying others to do religious work for them. Now, we maintain that

#### SERVICE FOR GOD IS A PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY

which a man must discharge for himself, and which one man cannot discharge for another. It is like eating, sleeping, and marrying. I am reminded of a story which may enforce this point of proxy duty in religion. A man called John became very indifferent about attendance at public worship, at which his wife Mary was most regular. "Pray for me, too," John used to say, as his wife left him at home on the Sunday and went to Church. By-and-bye the couple died, and the story says the husband and the wife appeared together at Heaven's gate. John prepared to enter. "Nay," the angel said, "Mary prayed for both, and she enters Heaven for both." And so I fear multitudes of



Christians who delegate their religious work to others will find they have transferred their reward as well. No, service by proxy will not do. I cannot perform your work ; you cannot do mine. By the influence of the Spirit of God I may reach souls which you cannot reach, and you, by the influence of that Spirit, may win souls that I cannot win. And if you will contemplate

#### THE VASTNESS OF THE WORK,

you will see that there is a demand for the utmost exertion of each and of all. While there is power in the Gospel of Christ to save every living soul, it is admitted that the existing means of bringing every creature under the influence of the Gospel are utterly insufficient. I will quote a witness on this point, one who is disinterested, for he is a paid minister ; and his words should be golden, seeing that he receives about a sovereign for every minute of public discourse. An American minister says : " Ministers cannot do the work of the world's evangelization. What are a few thousand ministers compared to the 60,000,000 of the population ? " He points out that, notwithstanding the efforts of all the Churches, iniquity still gains ground. " We want more troops," he says. " The Church has not sent a thousandth part of her strength into the field ; and the troops are camping by the still waters of Zion, when they ought to be at the front in the thick of the strife and the heat of the battle."



## A GREAT MISSIONARY ON UNPAID AGENCY.

Moreover, not only is the Gospel chariot hindered in its progress by placing the responsibility of personal service upon the few and not upon the many, but the service of the few is less successful for the reason that it is paid service. This point may not, perhaps, be at the first glance seen and appreciated. Churches have long been accustomed to paying ministers, and do not regard the practice as in any way mischievous. But how does the system impress itself upon people who are not accustomed to it? I recently read an address by that devoted servant of God, James Smith, Baptist missionary to India. Speaking on the question of the salvation of the untold millions in that country, Mr. Smith says: "It is by Native Agents that India must be converted!" But does he mean Paid or Unpaid Native Agents? He tells us that they tried Paid Agents, and that the result was mischievous, both as regards agents and people. "The Agents," Mr. Smith says, "were perpetually asking for more salary and for higher positions." Then, he says, Paid Agents were not respected. Why? "Because they were looked upon as labouring for money. So long," Mr. Smith goes on to say, "as you gather together your best men and give them salaries as native preachers, you will never have men coming forth feeling the power of the love of Christ in their hearts. I could not sleep to-night," he adds, "if I did not tell you that the paying of native preachers is stopping the progress of the Gospel, and is injurious to



the native Christians themselves." And the mischievous influence which Mr. Smith deplures in connection with paying native preachers in India more or less attends the system of a Paid Ministry wherever it prevails.

#### CUMULATIVE GAINS OF PERSONAL SERVICE.

But I would like further to point out the enormous positive gain that would result from every Christian man rendering his fair share of personal service for Christ. Let me give you a simple illustration of the cumulative power of individual effort for the spread of the Gospel on the lines of Lay Agency. I will suppose that in this town of Colne, where we are now assembled, there are 20,000 persons whose conversion to God we desire and seek. I will suppose that the task is entrusted to twenty paid ministers, and even if they are faithful men, they are not likely to obtain more than 20 converts each, or a total of 400, year by year. But at that rate it would take fifty years to embrace the whole 20,000. But I will suppose that the task is attempted by personal and individual effort. I will suppose that there are twenty earnest Christian men to begin with; and that each man is instrumental, in the hand of God, in the conversion of one soul for the labours of a year. We would have forty to begin the second year. Now, suppose the forty proceed in the same way, each leading one sinner to the Saviour in a year, there would be 80 in the third year. In this way there would be 160 in the fourth year; and if you will follow out the



calculation you will find that the whole 20,000 would be reached in a dozen years. Such is the enormous cumulative power of personal service for Christ under a system in which every Christian is called to work for the advancement of the Gospel.

#### DEMONSTRATES THE ADAPTABILITY OF THE GOSPEL.

Now, I will pass on to another valuable feature or merit in this system. Lay Agency also best fulfils the requirements of our time as a means of bringing the world to Christ, because it demonstrates in the clearest and most practicable form the suitability and adaptability of the Gospel to the needs and circumstances of all classes and conditions of men. If you want a truth to reach the heart of a man, you must present it as nearly as possible on the plane in which he moves, and from a standpoint which arrests his attention and commands his sympathy. Why was it, let me ask, that the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, was found working at a carpenter's bench? Why was it that He had to endure the common vicissitudes of human life? Why was it that He knew from experience what it was to be tired and poor and hungry? Was it not that the Lord Jesus Christ might Himself be in close touch with the millions whom He sought to redeem? And so the nearer we ourselves are to those whom we are trying to save, the more successful are we likely to be in our efforts.

#### WORKMEN SEEKING FELLOW-WORKMEN.

A well-known and justly admired Wesleyan minister,



Charles Garrett, has borne valuable testimony on this point. He says: "If the converted men of each class were to give themselves up to the conversion of their own class, they would soon have the world upside down." If anybody doubts this, two illustrations, given by Mr. Garrett, will supply convincing proof. "Under Mr. Moody," says Mr. Garrett, "two carters in Liverpool got converted. God put it into their hearts to work for their own class. They sought the salvation of carters, and, as the result of their efforts, hundreds of carters in Liverpool are Christian men." Mr. Garrett's second illustration refers to policemen, a class not hitherto considered conspicuous for their love of the Gospel. "Two policemen got converted," Mr. Garrett says. "They received the idea from God—work for Christ amongst the police. They held meetings, and told how God had blessed their souls; and now 400 Liverpool policemen meet for prayer and public worship."

#### MERCHANTS SEEKING MERCHANTS.

This is not setting class against class, of which we hear much, but inspiring class to work for the benefit of class; and we know that nothing goes so far in obliterating the distinctions of rank and class as earnest work for the salvation of souls. "A great work will be done," Mr. Garrett says, "when we send Christian merchants to carry the Gospel on 'Change and into all the life of barter. We want men in all occupations in the name of God to battle against the



sins of their own trade ; men in every walk of life showing the power of the Gospel to achieve the victory over the difficulties and obstacles peculiar and special to their path." A Clerical Agency, separated from the real life of the great bulk of the people, cannot present the Gospel with the same adaptation to the actual conditions in which the mass of the population live that Lay Agency can.

Lord Shaftesbury, whose broad-minded liberality and philanthropy have immortalized his memory, gave the following testimony to the value of Lay Agency :—

“ If the masses of the people are to be brought into the fold of organized Christianity the *whole conception of the duty of the Church must be changed*. There must be active aggressive work ; open-air preaching ; house-to-house visitation ; and, in short, every means employed to bring the truth home to the hearts and consciences of all those who are in the neighbourhood. This can never be done by purely Clerical Agency. Lay Agency is indispensable to the fulfilment of the Church's mission. But the efforts of the Church to make use of the laity are perpetually thwarted and crippled by the refusal of the Clergy to give their lay coadjutors free hands. Liberty is the essence of effective service. I was talking only the other day to a bishop, and said to him, ‘ I have no doubt that in your diocese there are at this moment nine hundred Godly working men who would only be too glad to co-operate with you in the work of spreading the Gospel among their fellow men, but the difficulty is with the Clergy



They are willing enough that laymen should cooperate, but it must be on their terms. If a man wishes to take part, say in an open-air service, instead of being content with ascertaining that he is intelligent and pious, and then bidding him do what best he can to accomplish his mission, they impose a host of stipulations and regulations: He must not read except such chapters as they direct, he must not use such and such prayers, he must not go to such and such places; in short, the poor man finds himself swathed in swaddling clothes to such an extent that he loses heart and you lose your lay agent. Depend upon it, the condition of success is the allowing of a large liberty to those whose hearts are in the right place.' ”

#### NOBLEST CONCEPTION OF DUTY.

Now, I have another point on which I would like to speak just for a moment. It is this: Lay Agency supplies the grandest ideal and the noblest conception of the duty of man to man. It calls every man to be like Christ in the sphere in which he moves, exhibiting a life of heroic service and sacrifice for the good of others. What is the most powerful motive which God sets before us in order to excite love in our hearts toward Him? Is it not this? “God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him might not perish, but have everlasting life.” What was the most powerful argument by which the great apostle sought to draw men to God? Was it not this? “He who was rich for our



sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich." The force of this consists in the vastness of the sacrifice ; in the perfect abnegation of self, and the absolute purity and disinterestedness of the motive. A Christian and a statesman whom many of us revere, referring to this topic a few years ago, said : " We live in an age when most of us have forgotten that the Gospel of our Saviour Christ, which He came to preach, and the sanction of which He sealed with His blood, in addition to all else, and besides scattering blessing over every class of the community, was above all the Gospel of the poor ; that the lot of the poor was that which He chose for Himself ; that from the ranks of the poor He selected His apostles, who went forth into the world to found the most glorious kingdom ever exhibited to the eyes of man." [W. E. Gladstone.]

#### A SALARIED CHRIST A FAILURE.

Now, I wish to present the thought I am going to express with profound reverence and solemnity. But I think when it is pointed out it will be manifest to all of us that if the work of human redemption had been arranged on a financial basis, and if Jesus Christ had received a salary of £10,000 a year as the Redeemer of mankind, the scheme would have been a failure. If the founding of the Christian Church and the early proclamation of the Gospel had been entrusted to an ecclesiastical hierarchy consisting of twelve Archbishops and Bishops of Jerusalem at salaries of £5,000



a year each, and seventy priestly disciples at £500 a year each, we should never have heard of the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the world would have remained in Pagan darkness. And I cannot understand how men expect that Christianity can be effectively promulgated through means and agencies upon which it could not have been founded. It was the spectacle of a band of men going forth sacrificing their worldly prospects, counting life itself cheap if only they might preach Christ, that everywhere arrested attention and won converts to the Gospel. And this same heroic spirit of self-sacrifice for the good of others is the

#### GREATEST POWER

over the hearts of men to-day. It is the Grace Darlings whose names are written on pages that are immortal. It is the men who brave perils in the life-boat service, or go down into the jaws of death when some colliery disaster occurs, that command our deepest feelings of admiration. Everywhere life poured out, as it were, an oblation for the good of others excites profound homage. We may behold the principle of self-sacrifice illustrated in a Florence Nightingale leaving the comforts and luxuries of home that she may go to the distant battlefield and bear the cup of water to quench the thirst of some dying soldier. Or in a Dr. Moffat, refusing temporal promotion, that he may go to heathen lands, and bear the torch of truth to them that sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Or we may see the principle manifested in a Mary



McCarthy, a delicate seamstress, hardly earning a subsistence with her needle from eight in the morning until eight at evening, and yet in her spare hours conveying the glad tidings of salvation to her neighbours, until by untiring exertion, carried on for thirty years, she was instrumental in winning 500 souls for Christ. Oh, do we not feel that, whether in the higher or in the humbler walks of life, such souls as these incarnate again the Spirit of our Lord! They keep Christ for ever on the earth, going about doing good, blessing the poor and the needy, rescuing the perishing and saving the lost.

I commend these thoughts to your consideration, and I appeal to you to manifest in your lives like fidelity to Christ. I especially appeal to you young men and young women to recognize Christ's claims to service from you. Enter His service, and set before you some definite task. I ask each of you to solemnly resolve that, God helping you, you will at least be instrumental in the salvation of one soul. I urge each of you to determine that, the Spirit of God helping you, there shall for your efforts be at least one more soul to swell the harmonies of heaven, one more to sweep the harp, to bear the palm and to wear the crown, and that you will at least lay one trophy at Christ's feet, and crown Him Lord of All.

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## IX.—THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST HUMANITY'S GREAT NEED.

[*Barkerhouse Road, Nelson, 1890.*]

“The Spirit of Christ humanity's great need” is a subject that will stand, although it may be imperfectly brought before you. In considering the theme, it has occurred to me to ask : If the Lord Jesus Christ were to visit the earth again to-day, where would he find followers, and what would be His place, His position and His function in the ecclesiastical arrangements of modern Christendom ? Glance over the life and work and characteristics of the world's Redeemer. Recall His words and deeds and the spirit He displayed all along the pathway from Bethlehem to Calvary ; and then look around the Churches to-day, from those conspicuous for sacerdotal splendour to the humblest mission-room in the land, and say where would Christ find His home, His sphere, His work ?

### SEARCHING FOR THE CHRIST.

On the banks of the Tiber, in the city of the Seven Hills, there reigns an ecclesiastical monarch who claims in an especial degree to be the representative of Jesus Christ upon earth ; but as in imagination you behold Christ's assumed viceregent, supported by cardinals gorgeously robed, and surrounded by all that makes for wordly pomp and state and grandeur, it is difficult to realize that we have here a true representative of Him



who said : " The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His Head. "

Many of you, no doubt, have been visitors to the House of Lords, and have seen the imposing array of Bishops on the episcopal benches ; but as you look upon these spiritual legislators, possessing legislative power and authority because Bishops over Christ's Church, it is difficult to recognize in these true representatives of Him who said : " My kingdom is not of this world. " Still more as you recall their votes for wars and bloodshed you fail to see in them a reflex of the Prince of Peace.

But now turn your thoughts in another direction. Go into yonder auction-room. There are bids of £1,000 and more, for what ? These bids are for what is called a church living ; that is, for the privilege of preaching Christ's Gospel and saving souls. But as you listen to the auctioneer, he minimizes anything there may be of service for Christ—the district is small and the people are few ; and he magnifies the attractions of nature, and the beauty of the surrounding scenery. There is game in the wood, and fish in the stream, and sport in the field—the maximum of the pleasures of earth with the minimum of service for the Master. As you hear the auctioneer's hammer fall at the highest bid, you seem also to feel the indignant spirit of Christ, as it found expression in the words of Peter to Simon Magus : " Thy money perish with thee because thou hast thought the gift of God could be purchased with money. "



MODERN PRACTICES APPLIED IN THE APOSTOLIC  
CHURCHES.

But let us change our mode of reasoning, and instead of bringing Christ into the midst of church leaders and scenes of to-day, let us project modern church customs and practices into the times of Christ and His Apostles. Let Archbishops and Bishops, and Right Reverends and Reverends, trace the footsteps of the Lord Jesus, see Him in the temple and synagogue, follow Him from city to city, on the hill-side or by the sea, and how many of these great ecclesiastical dignitaries would have owned in His day that they were disciples of the humble Carpenter of Nazareth?

Go further into particulars of procedure with which we are all familiar. There is a meeting at Ephesus of the leaders of the churches all round about, a circuit meeting in fact, and it is addressed by the Reverend Paul, who says something like the following:—"Dear Brethren, I have been labouring with you for three years, and God has blessed my ministry among you; but now I am called to a larger sphere, and am about to leave you. There is the trifling consideration that my present stipend of £300 will be advanced to £500, and that could not be expected from you." Of course, the Reverend Paul departs amid many tears. Then these Church officials at Ephesus begin to look round, and they learn that the Reverend Peter, the famous preacher of Pentecost, is receiving only £200 a year at Antioch, and they call him to a larger sphere and to £300 a year. Then it is the



turn of the Church officials at Antioch to look round, and they find that the sainted Apostle John is at a poor place with only £100 a year, and they give him a call.

If such things as these were alleged, would they not be an outrage on Christ's Apostles, a libel on the character of Paul, Peter and John? The chief of the Apostles declared that by his own hands he had maintained himself, and ministered to the necessities of those who were with him. If Christianity had been based upon a professional and financial basis, as we see it in the Churches to-day, it would not have survived a single generation. Whatever defects there may be in our own system and polity, and whatever imperfections may manifest themselves in the practices of our Churches, they are not associated with pecuniary considerations.

Of course, we have our weak places and our faults. Although we can claim credit for purity and disinterestedness in our motives, in common with other religious bodies, our progress is hindered by little jealousies, and by petty ambitions, and we need more of the spirit of Christ in our Church officers' and leaders' meetings and in our Christian work generally. But I must leave the Church as it should be, because that subject is in much abler hands than mine, and turn to other spheres.

#### CHRIST'S SPIRIT NEEDED IN PARLIAMENT.

I know of no place where the spirit of Christ is more



needed to-day than in the Legislature of this Christian country. Do you think if there had been 650 men like Jesus Christ sitting in the House of Commons, that there would have ever been any question of endowing a traffic, whose gain means the tears and sorrows of the widows and orphans and sisters and brothers of 60,000 drunkards gone down to the drunkard's grave every year?

(The Speaker at this point held a telegram in his hand, the purport of which was effectively anticipated by the President, Bro. Worthington, who, rising to his feet, exclaimed, "The Bill is withdrawn." An extraordinary scene ensued. With remarkable spontaneity, the audience rose and cheered most vociferously. Cheer followed cheer, women as well as men waving their handkerchiefs, and giving tokens of joy and gladness that the compensation clauses had been withdrawn, and that the temperance sentiment of the country had so signally prevailed. The excitement having subsided and quietness having been restored, Mr. Brimelow read the telegram, which was to the effect that the clauses in question would not be proceeded with, whereat the cheering was again resumed. He remarked that the people had won a greater victory than the defeat of the Bill by votes in the House of Commons. They had compelled the promoters of the compensation scheme to run away).

#### WEALTH AND POVERTY IN CHRISTIAN ENGLAND.

This memorable episode being ended, Mr. Brimelow



resumed his remarks. Turning now, he said, to other spheres and scenes, there is a grand ballroom, brilliantly illuminated, magnificently decorated, and thronged with people in rich and costly dresses. The flowers alone have cost £1,000. Imagine, if you can, the Carpenter at Nazareth presenting Himself there! Society, as it is called, would not recognize Him, although arrogating to itself the title of Christian, and although the guests bow every Sabbath at the mention of His name.

But in that same city, the centre of civilization and storehouse of the world's wealth, you pass through low streets, into crowded courts, and enter miserable rooms, where may be seen pale-faced and weary women, to whom life is a terrible struggle. Their eyes are tired and their fingers ache with long hours of toil to make dresses for sisters dancing in the blaze of the magnificent ballroom. The social contrasts which mar our Christian civilization are forcibly depicted in the powerful poem by James Russell Lowell:—

#### JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL'S PARABLE.

Said Christ, our Lord, "I will go and see,  
How the men, my brethren, believe in Me."  
He passed not again through the gate of birth,  
But made himself known to the children of earth.

Then said the Chief Priests, and Rulers, and Kings,  
"Behold, now, the Giver of all good things!  
Go to; let us welcome with pomp and state,  
Him who alone is mighty and great!"

With carpets of gold the ground they spread,  
Wherever the Son of Man should tread.  
And in palace chambers lofty and rare,  
They lodged Him and served Him with kingly fare.



Great organs surged through arches dim,  
 Their jubilant floods in praise of Him,  
 And in Church, and Palace, and Judgment Hall,  
 He saw His image high over all!

But still wherever His steps they led,  
 The Lord in sorrow bent down His head;  
 And from under the heavy foundation stones,  
 The Son of Mary heard bitter groans!

And in Church and Palace, and Judgment Hall,  
 He marked great fissures that rent the wall,  
 And opened wider and yet more wide,  
 As the living foundation heaved and sighed!

“Have ye founded your thrones and altars then  
 On the bodies and souls of living men?  
 And think ye, that building shall endure  
 That shelters the noble and crushes the poor.

“With gates of silver and bars of gold  
 Ye have fenced My sheep from their Father’s fold;  
 I have heard the dropping of their tears  
 In heaven these eighteen hundred years!”

“O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt;  
 We build but as our fathers built;  
 Behold Thine images—how they stand  
 Sovereign and sole through all the land!

“Our task is hard—with sword and flame,  
 To hold thy earth for ever the same,  
 And with sharp crooks of steel to keep  
 Still, as thou leftest them, Thy sheep.”

Then Christ sought out an artizan,  
 A low-browed, stunted, and haggard man,  
 And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin  
 Pushed from her faintly want and sin.

These set he in the midst of them,  
 And, as they drew back their garment-hem,  
 For fear of defilement, “Lo, here,” said He,  
 “The images ye have made of Me!”

### THREE CHARACTERISTICS OF CHRIST’S SPIRIT.

The world to-day, as nearly nineteen centuries ago,  
 needs the spirit of Christ. What are the characteristics



of His spirit? They may be set forth in three great principles which He enunciated:—

1. The brotherhood of mankind. Surely a select few of God's creatures have no divine right to grind down their fellows, and use them as slaves under a system of labour whose outcome is the sweater's den, with all its resultant poverty, misery, disease, and death. Christ taught that all men were brothers, not equal in gifts and talents, but at any rate equal in their right to reasonably fair conditions under which they may live and serve their Creator.

2. Christ taught the duty of doing good to others. The cankerworm of the age in which we live, which is eating out the heart of society, is selfishness. Men of vast means spend enormous sums upon their own enjoyment, like the rich man of whom Christ spoke, and hand on their hundreds of thousands to others without a thought for the poor around them, or for the spread of the Gospel among men. Why, even within the limited circle of our own denomination there have been those whom God has prospered, who have left behind them £20,000, £30,000, and even £50,000, or more; and, not distinguished for great liberality in their lives, they have forgotten in death the impulse they might have given to the cause of religion and human happiness. Christ's daily life was a continual protest against the selfishness of His age, and His spirit was never more needed than it is to-day.

3. And then there is the spirit of self-sacrifice of which Christ's life was the embodiment and His death



the consummation. More brotherhood among all ranks of men, less of caste and class distinctions; more care for the welfare of others, not merely in the way of charity, but in the creation of conditions which recognize the mutual rights of all to whatever class they belong; and more sacrifice of purse and time and life for the uplifting of humanity. If Christ were to visit the earth to-day, He would again seek out the poor, the suffering, and the lost; the condition of the great mass of mankind would be His supreme concern; and we are only worthy to bear the name of Christ as we catch the Master's spirit and seek to do the Master's work.





## X.—INDEPENDENT METHODISM IN THE PAST.

[*Warrington, 1897.*]

As an old Warringtonian, I rejoice in all the numerous evidences of progress in the town during the past thirty years; and I am especially glad to speak under the presidency of our Chairman (Mr. F. Monks), because I am thereby reminded of the duty of recognizing the great debt which many of us who came under his personal influence, and the town generally, owe to the splendid labours at the Old Mechanics' Institute and elsewhere, of a former minister of your Church, I mean Dr. Philip Carpenter—minister of Cairo Street Chapel, philanthropist and public benefactor. You have referred, Mr. Chairman, to doctrinal and other differences of opinion between the various branches of the Church of Christ. Whatever may have been the case in the past, a greater and broader charity in this respect prevails to-day. While we each hold to our denominational beliefs, we allow to others the rights of conscience we claim for ourselves.

And now to the subject which is to engage our attention. As I read the programme for this evening, there is to be one speech, but it is to be delivered in three parts, and by three speakers. The subject is, "Independent Methodism—Past, Present, and Future," and my share is the past. I have no wish to complain, but although I may know something of the past, I greatly prefer to dwell upon the future of Independent Methodism. Indeed, if I could have been allowed a



choice in the matter, I think I should have preferred being born far on in the next century, so that I might have seen the progress, not only of Independent Methodism, but of mankind, in all aspects—political, social, moral, religious and otherwise—about the year 2,000. However, that cannot be, and I must accept the task assigned me, and speak upon the past of Independent Methodism.

And let us ask several pertinent questions. When and where did Independent Methodism originate? Who founded it? What is Independent Methodism? And why does it exist and claim a place in the Christian Church? Within the limit of time at my disposal, these questions can only be very briefly answered.

#### ORIGIN OF INDEPENDENT METHODISM.

Independent Methodism originated in Warrington about the year 1797—exactly one hundred years ago. The earliest documentary evidence of this consists of an Independent Methodist Church baptismal register, the first entry in which bears date 1798, and refers to an ancestor of Mr. William Mercer, one of our preachers at the present time. Presumably, the Church existed before that year. But although that may be the date of the birth of Independent Methodism as a separate religious society or organization, we must go much further back than 1797 in order to understand the principles underlying the contention out of which the denomination sprang. It is usually



said that Methodism was born and cradled at Oxford. I rather incline to the view that Isaac Taylor is nearer the mark, when he says the Mother of the Wesleys was the Mother of Methodism.

Further, I think the Mother of the Wesleys, if not also the Mother of Independent Methodism, at least gave inspiration to and set in motion the great principle of personal religious freedom and of personal responsibility for spiritual service of which Independent Methodism is one of many manifestations. Susannah Wesley was a very remarkable woman, a woman of good common-sense and filled with an earnest desire for the salvation of souls. These qualities of mind and heart appear conspicuous in two incidents in her life. While Samuel Wesley was absent from home on one occasion, attending the sittings of Convocation, she invited her neighbours to the rectory at Epworth, held simple services and read sermons to the people who thronged the house. The curate, whom Samuel had left in charge, was much perturbed by these irregularities, and wrote to Mr. Wesley begging him to interpose and put an end to the innovation. Accordingly, Samuel wrote to Susannah: at least he wished her to induce someone else to read the sermons. Susannah wrote back, that in his absence nobody else could read the sermons without spoiling them.

The services at the rectory were continued, and the curate wrote again to Mr. Wesley more urgently. Samuel then wrote, mildly requesting his wife to desist. Fully satisfied that a good work was being done by the



services, Susannah replied that she was reluctant to discontinue the services on request, but she would obey her husband's commands, and if he commanded her to do so, she would discontinue the services, leaving to her husband the responsibility at the Day of Judgment. Samuel sent no commands, and Susannah successfully asserted woman's right to actively participate in spiritual service.

#### ORIGIN OF THE LAY PREACHER IN METHODISM.

The other incident refers to the origin of the Methodist "local" preacher. When John Wesley heard that Thomas Maxwell had been preaching, he ordered him to discontinue. "Take care," said Wesley's mother, "what you are doing. Thomas Maxwell is as surely called to preach the Gospel as you are. Go and hear him." John Wesley followed his mother's advice, with the result that he exclaimed, "It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth good in His sight." In this way Susannah was instrumental in breaking down the barrier in John Wesley's heart against unordained persons preaching the Gospel, and thus she threw into Methodism the problem of the "local" preacher, with supervising difficulties which will never be solved, I venture to say, until the "local" preacher, as he is called, ceases to hold any inferior status in the Methodist Ministry.

The connection of this historic episode with the rise of Independent Methodism is this: Among members of the society worshipping at Bank Street Wesleyan



Chapel, one hundred years ago, were several "local" preachers and their friends, who were numerous. The itinerant minister thought fit to exclude these "locals" from the principal pulpits in Warrington and elsewhere. They submitted so far as services in the chapels were concerned; but friends opened their houses for services during week-day evenings, and the "locals" preached there and the people flocked to hear them. The itinerant minister resented their action, and ordered these services to be discontinued; and because the brethren declined, the local preachers and their friends were expelled from the society.

#### SOME EARLY INDEPENDENT METHODISTS.

Amongst those who were thus expelled were Richard Harrison, Richard Mills, William McGuinness, Samuel Rigby and Peter Reid. Amongst the society members (not preachers) who were also expelled, were a newly-married couple, named Peter and Hannah Phillips. It is recorded that the itinerant minister called upon Peter Phillips before his expulsion and remonstrated with him for sympathizing with the local preachers, especially as he (Mr. Phillips) had a brother who was an itinerant Wesleyan minister. Peter Phillips is said to have made this quite characteristic reply: "If you can show me that their preaching is inferior because it is unpaid, and that their labours are not blessed by God, I will leave them." The itinerant did not attempt it, for the expelled brethren were successful preachers of the Gospel. Being thus expelled, these brethren pro-



ceeded to conduct services on their own account, and their efforts seem to have been attended with marked success, for after conducting public worship for several years in various places, in crowded rooms, they took land and built Friars Green Chapel in 1802. In 1808—that is, slightly over ten years had passed over—they reported to the Annual Meeting several places of worship in Warrington and the district, and nearly 200 members. Among the preachers at that time were Richard Harrison, Richard Mills, Peter Phillips, William McGuinness, George Brimelow, and Peter Wright, two of these (Brimelow and Mills) being great uncles of mine and of my wife. The Denomination, or Union of Churches, which was probably formed in 1805, consisted in 1808 of about 20 churches and 1,217 members.

#### THE TITLE “QUAKER METHODISTS.”

Confirmed in their views by several Quakers who joined them, the Warrington brethren continued to preach the Gospel, as they had done in the Wesleyan Society, without fee or reward. In order to put an end to the capricious exercise of power in the Church by one individual, they abolished personal rule, and established a Methodist Church on the basis of self-government, after the pattern of the Independent (now Congregational) Churches, but with a ministry on the lines of the Society of Friends. Because of their dress and manners, they were styled “Quaker Methodists,” but after some years they assumed the title of Independent Methodist. What they meant by this title is clearly stated in the Minutes of the Annual



Meeting for 1815. "By the word 'Methodist,' says the definition, "we mean that we hold the doctrines of Wesleyan Methodism; and by 'Independent' we mean that each Church controls its own internal affairs without reference to any Conference or Synod." That definition of our polity as a denomination, formulated over 80 years ago, stands good to-day, except that it is incomplete, as it makes no reference to our special position with regard to the Ministry.

PETER AND HANNAH PHILLIPS AND CO-WORKERS.

Thus were laid the foundations of the Church whose centenary we are celebrating, and of the denomination whose Annual Assembly we are once more holding in Warrington. I was not personally acquainted with any of the early founders, except Peter and Hannah Phillips. These two loving, pious, and devoted servants of God laboured with all their might for more than fifty years; they stamped their impress for good both upon Friars Green Church and the whole town, and departed this life, leaving fragrant memories lovingly cherished by thousands. I remember some of their early fellow-labourers. Amongst others, I recollect Humphrey Harper, of Manchester, who often preached at Friars Green Chapel. I also knew William Yates, James Ashton, George Peck, Thomas Eyes, Thomas Oxley (Manchester), and others, all sincere, earnest, and faithful preachers of the Gospel. Amongst women who were conspicuous in this early period, besides Hannah Phillips, I remember Mary



Richardson,\* whose residence on Pinnars Brow was open for prayer on Sunday morning, which I attended when very young. These have all passed away, and have entered into their rest and reward. They have doubtless mingled with those of the Wesleyan Society from whom they were expelled, and they now see eye to eye about matters respecting which on earth they so seriously differed. It is for us their successors to carry on the work in loving sympathy for the parent Church, and fervent charity towards all who love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity and truth.

#### 100 YEARS OF INDEPENDENT METHODISM.

During many years the progress of the denomination was almost stationary. The growth within recent years, and the present position of Independent Methodism, will be taken up by a succeeding speaker. The past, judged by the standard of success, has not been altogether satisfactory. It has, however, established the fact that at least one Church has existed upon the basis of Independent Methodism for one hundred years. And other Churches in our denomination are approaching their centenaries. Moreover, the degree of success achieved, especially in recent years, is most encouraging. With firm faith in our principles, with strong determination to go forward, our denomination may yet be instrumental in achieving mighty results, and through the Holy Spirit be an effective agent in helping to bring the kingdoms of this world to our God and His Christ.

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\* Revered as the "Friend of the Slave," she having nobly liberated slaves held as her property in the West Indies.



## XI.—OUR MESSAGE FOR THE TIMES.

[*Salem, Nelson, 1899.*]

The standard by which all Christian Churches must be judged is their power to evangelize the world; and as we realize, or fail to realize, in our lives and service, the great love of the Lord Jesus Christ for mankind, we succeed or we fail in our mission. We live in times of unrest, which may well excite our concern for the progress of religion and the future of the Church of God. Instead of the professed followers of Jesus Christ being a united army, going forward to do battle against the sins and vices of the age, many are, in the very presence of the common foe, disputing over forms and ceremonies and appliances of worship. Reading the Acts of the Apostles and the Epistles, and reading what takes place in some churches to-day, one asks where is Apostolic Christianity? The attention of Parliament was recently called to extraordinary proceedings in so-called Protestant Established Churches. For example, Mr. Samuel Smith drew attention to a service called the

“BENEDICTION OF THE HOLY FIRE,”

of which the following account was given: “When I got into the Church it was totally dark. There was not a glimmer of light. I knew there was somebody in the Church, because I could hear the rustling of dresses, and so I felt my way to a seat. After a time, I looked down by the side of the chapel and saw what looked like the light of a tallow candle, and it came nearer and



nearer close to my side. As he came into dim light I could see a little boy carrying a bucket of Holy Water, two men swinging incense, and then this tallow candle, and priests in full vestments and birettas. They began the ceremony by looking into the font. A priest blew down into the water to drive the devil out, then set to work to blow the devil out of the fire of a tallow candle; then he blessed the holy candle, and the holy fire of it, and from that holy fire they lit all the lights of the Church."

Now you will look in vain for anything like that in the Gospels or the Acts of the Apostles or the Epistles. The early Christian Churches knew none of these things. But even worse, perhaps, is the contrast presented in the celebration of the Lord's Supper. In Apostolic times, it was a very simple and homely meal. This is evident from the restraints imposed upon it by the Apostle Paul, who found that in some instances there was eating and drinking unduly on such occasions. But what do we find is the practice in some Churches to-day? The service is perverted into a sacrifice—the mass, as it is called.

#### ALLEGED MIRACLE AT THE MASS.

A little book, recently quoted in the House of Commons, has the following:—

“When the Priest begins the Prayer, that which is on the Altar is Bread and Wine. When the Priest ends the Prayer, that which is on the Altar is Christ's Body and Blood: it is Jesus; it is God. How is it



done? I cannot tell you, and the Priest does not know himself how he does it. It is a work of God, and no one knows how God works. If you were to ask the great St. Michael he could not tell you. If you were to ask the Blessed Mary, she could not tell you. It is God's own secret—a knowledge which belongs to Him and to no one else."

The writer asks, "How is it done?" but we must ask a prior question, "Is it done?" When the blind man received his sight the proofs of the miracle were manifest. In this matter let the reality of the thing be tested. When the bread and wine are placed on the altar, let the chemical analyst test them to certify that they are bread and wine. Let the prayer then be said, and the Host elevated, and every prescribed formula be gone through. Then let the chemical analyst test them again. If they are changed—if the bread has become human flesh and the wine has become human blood—then I for one will not partake, for I refuse to be a cannibal. Where is the consistency of sending missionaries amongst cannibals to teach them not to eat one another if in the most sacred rites of our religion we eat human flesh and drink human blood? On the other hand, if the bread and wine are not changed, as I suspect they are not—(the Mayor: Strongly suspect)—yes, strongly suspect they are not, then what a fraud and imposture is practised in many Churches of the Establishment.

#### CONTRASTS WITH EARLY CHRISTIAN WORSHIP.

It is indisputable that such practices receive no



countenance from the New Testament. Indeed, nothing is more remarkable than the contrast between modern congregations met for worship and the assemblies for worship in the Churches of the Apostolic age, and the nature and character of the services then and now. The thought of Church and Home was then intimately associated. Paul sends salutations to Nymphas "and the Church which is in his house." An epistle is addressed to Philemon "and to the Church in his house." One half of some congregations to-day are strangers to the other half. There is little of personal acquaintance and less of friendship sometimes between persons who have worshipped together for years. But this was not the case in New Testament times. In those days, Home, Family and Church associations were closely related.

And the near resemblance of the Church to the Home largely influenced the character of the services. They, too, were of a free and homely description, as the epistles bear witness. No Brother monopolized the Ministry of the Gospel. Writing to the Corinthians, Paul says: "For ye may all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be comforted." And to the Colossians he writes: "Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." The services in those days partook of the social freedom of our fellowship meetings.

The homeliness, simplicity and warmth of early



Christian Church life are borne testimony to by M'Giffert, probably the greatest living authority on the characteristics of the Church in the Apostolic Age. "In her early days," he says, "the sense of brotherhood was strong in the Church. It would be a mistake to picture the early Christians as holding regular and formal services such as are held to-day. . . . It was in their daily intercourse with one another, and in the little family gatherings from house to house, that their Christian life found fullest expression, and the sense of Christian brotherhood, which was all-controlling, had freest play."

The early Christians met for worship with but little pre-arrangement—less than in the smallest place of worship in our Connexion to-day. Those whose Ministry was acceptable were doubtless encouraged by the hearers who profited by their spiritual experience, and they were in due time called Ministers; "but with no rite of ordination, no priestly function, nor special privileges. None were forbidden to speak or pray. All the men and women of the congregation shared alike in the responsibility of a priesthood free to all in the brotherhood of Christ." The Church realized the beautiful ideal of a Family of God, a Household of Faith, a Brotherhood of Man.

How the unpretentious services of the early Churches have been transformed, how step by step they became formalized, how the free working of the Spirit of God in each member was checked, and the worship gradually made a priestly performance, is the story of



the centuries. To-day the problem before the Christian world is how we can get back to the simplicity and power of Apostolic times. For we have not only lost simplicity, but also power—the power by which the heroes forming the Church in the Upper Room at Jerusalem within a few years spread the Gospel all over Asia, and raised the standard of the Cross in the Imperial City of Rome itself.

#### SACERDOTALISM WEAKENS SPIRITUALITY.

Sacerdotal practices have ever weakened the spirituality of the Church. The truth is that at the close of this nineteenth century, as Dr. Fairbairn has calmly but most forcibly pointed out, “we are face to face with a movement which lays extreme emphasis on ritual. Does the present generation of Englishmen recognize what that emphasis involves? Can history show a single instance of ritualistic development unaccompanied by the ultimate spiritual enfeeblement of the worshipper, and the creation of a priestly class? Can the teaching of Jesus be reconciled with the sacerdotalism which re-establishes in the supreme place that practice of ceremonial sacrifice which was condemned by the prophets and set aside by Christ? Can we find even a trace of Christ’s teaching in the denial to any followers or disciple of access to the Holiest, save through the mediation of the priest? These are urgent questions. We believe that this movement now agitating the Anglican Church is but a fresh illustration of those retrograde tendencies in the practice of



worship, which assert themselves in Pagan and Christian churches alike.”

The hope of all who long for the restoration of the lost spiritual power of the Church of God rests upon a return to the simplicity and freedom of the Ministry and Worship of Pentecostal days. Dr. Hatch, in his Hibbert Lectures, declares that if Christianity is to be again in the power it was in its earliest ages, the priesthood must be renounced and the brotherhood of the Church restored. In his work on “Catholicism, Roman and Anglican,” Dr. Fairbairn declares that Christ’s religion is essentially non-sacerdotal, and the Church he founded in no sense a clerical hierarchy or priest-governed kingdom. Further—and this is most important—Dr. Fairbairn says that Church is the most effective which wins most converts to Christ, and best employs those converts in His service.

#### OUR CLEAR AND EMPHATIC MESSAGE.

What, then, is “Our Message for the Times?” It appears to me that our message as a denomination is clear and emphatic. We stand as a Union of Churches at the Antipodes from all that fosters and ministers to formalism in public worship. We set ourselves against all ceremonial ordinances and observances and practices likely to intervene with the direct access of the human soul to God. We will have nothing in our services calculated to obscure man’s vision of the Crucified and Risen Christ. We recognize no human priests, nor visible altars, nor cloud of incense, nor



artificial lights, nor other sacerdotal paraphernalia. We may lack the earthly sensuous grandeur of what is seen and temporal; but by the grace of God it is ours to realize the spiritual glory of the unseen and eternal. We have a temple in which God dwells and is worshipped in spirit and in truth—it is the temple of the human heart. We have a priesthood, but it is the priesthood inaugurated by the Lord Jesus Christ—a priesthood of sacrifice and service from every true follower and believer who owns Him as Saviour and King. Elaborate ritual, art, the sense of the beautiful and all that makes for æsthetic worship may fulfil the desires and satisfy the wants of the few; but the great mass of mankind are longing for a simple Gospel which will go straight to the heart and life, which will win men back to God, recreate them in newness of life and transform them into workers for the salvation of others. Now, as in Pentecostal days, the passion for souls must fire every member of the Church, and every Christian must become a propagating force in the Kingdom of Christ.

For the attainment of this high ideal of personal service for Christ from every member of the Christian Church, there must be restored to the people the spiritual rights and privileges they enjoyed and the sense of responsibility for service felt in Apostolic times. Instead of a professional priesthood, there must be a full recognition of the Priesthood of all Believers. Instead of professional status and commercial gain, the motive for service must be the constraining love of the



Christ. Instead of visible altars, let the holy fire descend upon human hearts. Instead of consecrating elements, let there be the consecration of body, soul and spirit. Instead of earthy incense, let the Spirit of God purify and inspire. Instead of a visible cross, let there be faith in the sacrifice offered once for all. Then may the Gospel renew its ancient power. "I, if I be lifted up, will draw all men unto Me." Let us uplift the Christ. Cling to the Cross. It is that manifestation of infinite love which will yet win mankind back to God.





## XII.

OUTLOOK OF INDEPENDENT METHODISM  
FOR TWENTIETH CENTURY.

[*Stretford*, 1900.]

I have been asked to address you on the "Outlook of Independent Methodism for the Twentieth Century."

Without pausing to remark upon the much debated question as to whether we are already in the Twentieth Century, or whether the opening of the New Century is still before us, there is one preliminary observation I wish to make. I thank the Committee which selected the subject, because it indicates, I take it, faith in the future of Independent Methodism. Moreover, the deputation from the Evangelical Free Church Council to-day warmly encouraged us to maintain our denominational stand on the Free Ministry. The Twentieth Century will cover a long period, another hundred years! It is, therefore, a question inspiring hope—hope that springs eternal in the human breast. It is a question that should excite stimulating aspirations and lead on to noble efforts and sacrifices, to stronger faith and more strenuous service in behalf of the principles for which we stand, and under which we have put forth endeavours for nearly one hundred years.

The outlook upon any field of observation will be determined very largely by the standpoint of the



observer. If we were to take our stand upon the exalted pedestal of some of the world-wide denominations around us, we might consider that the outlook of Independent Methodism was narrow, obscure, poor, depressing, insignificant.

But if you could recall from the dead to the land of the living the President of the first Annual Assembly of Independent Methodists, ninety-five years ago, and seat him on this platform, he would gaze upon this gathering with wonder and astonishment, and also with bright hope and sanguine expectation.

The first Annual Assembly did not exceed in numbers the smallest District Meeting in the Connexion to-day, and by reason of our greater advantages, the superiority in all other respects is even more conspicuous than the point of numbers. When Queen Victoria came to the Throne, there were less than one dozen Churches in the Connexion; there had been more, but the number had fallen to eleven. Now there are 150 Churches in the Connexion. Of that most hopeful of all features before us to-day, our Sunday Schools, there were comparatively few; now we have 25,000 scholars in our Sunday Schools.

If some of those early Independent Methodists could be permitted for a moment to glance through the windows of Heaven and get a glimpse of Independent Methodism as it is to-day, they would afresh tune their harps and lift up their voices for new songs of joy and glory to Him who from such feeble and humble beginning had wrought out such wondrous work.



## OUR ATTITUDE TO THE SUBJECT.

But now I must inquire what is our attitude to the question. Does the prospect appear to us bright and hopeful? After devious wanderings in the wilderness of alternating hope and fear have we reached our Pisgah from which we behold the Land of Promise? In this busy and exacting age is there a place for a Free Ministry as well as a Free Church? Do we still share the heroism and zeal and faith and confidence and sense of duty of our fathers? If a handful of men, probably not more than five or six, were bold and brave enough to found a Connexion on our principles, are we with our greater numbers, our larger opportunities, our superior position, our immensely greater advantages every way, going forward into the next century with faith and hope that God is with us and will give success to our labours?

Our answers to these questions will depend upon our attitude to the principle at the basis of Independent Methodism. What is Independent Methodism to us? Is it a mere convenience, something built on the shifting sands of ever-drifting expediency? If that be so, than Independent Methodism has no outlook at all. It is doomed, and will pass away more swiftly than it has come together. Or is it something that in our own minds and hearts we believe is built upon the rock of principle? Do we still believe in the Scriptural foundations of our Church polity? Do we still feel called upon to maintain before the Christian World our testimony in favour of a Free Ministry? If we do,



then the outlook is brighter than at any period in our history.

#### OUR POLITY AND MINISTRY.

What is our Denominational Faith and on what does it rest? We are Methodists—in doctrine, form of worship and usages. We sprang from Methodism, and have remained faithful to all the essentials of Methodist life. In matters of Church Government we are Independents, every Church holding and controlling its own property and pulpit, and regulating its own internal affairs.

Then to Methodist Doctrines and Independent Polity we have united the principle of a Free Ministry, which is in the main the distinctive note which differentiates us from all other denominations.

Now, the adoption of this principle was no mere accident, nor a mere expedient to meet the exigencies of the situation and the circumstances of the passing moment. It is an article in our Denominational Faith adopted on principle, and it came about in this way: The early Independent Methodists were intimately associated with the Quakers; at first, they were styled "Quaker Methodists," and no name since has so accurately described the Denomination. Now, the Quakers have maintained a Free Ministry for nearly 300 years, upheld it on scriptural and many other grounds, and it is from the Quakers we derived this principle.

Briefly stated, the position is this:—There are two



spheres of Ministry set before us in the New Testament; there are those who were Bishops, Presbyters, Elders, Pastors, Teachers, to whom Paul said, when addressing them at Miletus, they must maintain themselves by the labour of their hands as he had done, and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Then there were those preachers, heralds of the Gospel, Evangelists, who went about from city to city and place to place, had no fixed homes and who were not in business occupations, and of these it is said "the labourer is worthy of his hire," and they had a right to live of the Gospel.

#### PRACTICE OF THE PRIMITIVE CHURCH.

Now I wish to say this is not an arbitrary, or fanciful, distinction. It is clear distinction running through the New Testament; and it is a distinction maintained by the Church for the first four hundred years of the Christian era. Long after the Clergy became a separate class distinguished from the Laity, the principle of an unpaid Ministry prevailed in the Church.

Prof. Hatch, in his valuable work entitled "Early Organization of the Christian Church," says: "The Bishop and Presbyters of those early days kept banks, practised medicine, wrought as silversmiths, tended shops, or sold their goods in the open market."

The "Apostolical Constitutions," written about the middle of the Fourth Century, give the following



exhortations:—" Let the young be diligent in business so as to have enough for their own support and bestow on the needy. For we ourselves"—say these Bishops—" besides giving our attention to the Word of the Gospel, do not neglect our inferior employments. Some of us are fishermen, some tent-makers, some husbandmen, for none of those dedicated to God ought to be idle."

Coming down later, there was a great Council of the Church held at Carthage in the year 380, which directed that " Clergymen, however learned they may be in the Divine Word, should provide themselves with food and clothing by some handicraft or agricultural labour."

And Chrysostom, describing the country clergy near the end of the Fourth Century, says: " They were engaged in Agriculture—at one time following the plough; at another taking their turn in the pulpit; at one time hedging or cutting thorns with a bill-hook; at another sowing the seed of the Word of God."

Thus the practice of Bishops and other Clergymen maintaining themselves continued to the end of the Fourth Century.

And even at a much later date, after the practice in regard to the support of the Ministry had been changed, the Councils of the Church held from time to time were exceedingly jealous lest the commercial spirit ruled the Church, and deteriorated the Ministry.

The Council of Elvira prohibited the practice of dropping money in the box at the rite of Baptism,



giving as the reason "lest it be thought that the Priest gives for money what he has freely received."

The Council of Trullo, held at Constantinople in 692, near the end of the Seventh Century, prohibited the Clergy from receiving any gift from communicants at the Lord's Table, declaring that "the grace of God is not an article of merchandize, nor is the sanctification of the Spirit to be bought with money."

#### ADVENT OF A PAID MINISTRY.

But when and how came the change when Bishops and Clergymen ceased to maintain themselves and became chargeable to others ?

The answer is, when the Church came under the heel of the State. The Emperor Constantine was an Imperialist in Religion. After his conversion he conferred upon Christianity the rank and splendour of the Pagan Religions. Instead of humble places of worship, he provided magnificent temples. He would have services in Christian Churches rivalling in grandeur the rites in heathen temples, and Bishops and Priests in the Christian Churches were raised to the dignity of Pagan Priests. He provided gold-embroidered robes for Bishops. Thereafter they ceased to be tent-makers, or husbandmen, or fisherman, or carpenters, or to follow occupation or business pursuits of any kind. The whole system was changed. And the altered practice was enforced by authority, for in the middle of the Fifth Century a law was passed prohibiting clerical persons from engaging in any trade whatever.



Now, it is most important that we should note the effect of this resort to a Ministry of the Gospel organized on a financial basis. The universal testimony with regard to the effect of this change is that when the Christian Church lost the freedom of her Ministry and reserved the Ministry for a class, she also lost her Spiritual power. Voluntary enthusiasm and personal responsibility for the propagation of the knowledge of the Gospel became paralysed and the Church halted in her victorious march.

#### ANTICIPATING RETURN TO A FREE MINISTRY.

In anticipating a return to the primitive simplicity and pristine glory of the first four centuries of the Christian Church, we are supported by the ablest expositors of Church history, and some of the most earnest Christian Reformers.

Dean Stanley says: "In the first beginning of Christianity there was no such institution as the Clergy; and it is conceivable there may be a time when it will cease to be."

Dr. Hatch bears the following remarkable testimony as the result of his researches and indicates the lessons we should deduce from them:—"Christianity came unto the educated world in the simple dress of a prophet of righteousness. It won that world by the stern reality of its life, by the subtle bonds of its brotherhood, by its divine message of consolation and hope. Around it thronged the race of eloquent talkers who persuaded it to change its dress and to assimilate its



language to their own. It seemed thereby to win a speedier and completer victory. But it purchased conquest at the price of reality. With that its progress stopped.

“There has been an element of sophistry in it ever since, and so far as in any age that element has been dominant, so far has the progress of Christianity been arrested. Its progress is arrested now because many of its preachers live in an unreal world. The truths they set forth are truths of utterance rather than truths of their lives.

“But if Christianity is to be again the power that it was in its earliest ages,” Professor Hatch says, “it must renounce its costly purchase. The hope of Christianity is that the class which was artificially created may ultimately disappear, and that the sophistical preaching will melt as a transient mist before the preaching of the prophets of the ages to come, who like the prophets of the ages long gone by, will speak only as the Spirit gives the utterance.”

Again I wish to quote the opinions of one who has recently passed from us—a distinguished man of letters—John Ruskin. Mr. Ruskin was an Oxford Professor, a Churchman, and when he writes it is of what he sees in his own Church. Against a separate Order of Clergy, maintained for that object, and claiming a certain position by reason of their ministrations, he was the greatest voice of the century. The

#### PROFESSIONALISM AND COMMERCIALISM

at the basis of the Clerical Order called forth from him



again and again scathing criticism and severe rebuke. In "Fors Clavigera" Ruskin wrote:—

"Whilst it is unquestionably true that many Clergymen are sacrificing themselves without any thought of temporal reward, the preaching of Christ has nevertheless become an acknowledged profession, and means of livelihood for gentlemen; and the Simony of to-day differs only from that of Apostolic times in that, while the elder Simon thought the gift of the Holy Ghost worth a considerable offer in ready money, the modern Simon would on the whole refuse to accept the same gift of the Third Person of the Trinity, without a nice little attached income, a pretty Church with a steeple restored by Mr. Scott, and an eligible neighbourhood."

In another place Ruskin writes:—"No way will ever be found of rightly ordaining men who have taken up the trade of preaching as a means of livelihood, and to whom it is a matter of personal interest whether they preach in one place or another; only those who have left their means of living that they may preach, and whose peace follows them as they wander and abides where they enter in, are of God's ordaining; and practically until the Church insists that every one of her Ministers shall either have an independent income, or support himself for his Ministry on Sunday, by true bodily toil during the week, no word of the living Gospel will ever be spoken from her pulpits. How many of those who occupy them have verily been invited to such office by the Holy Ghost may be easily



judged by observing how many the Holy Ghost has similarly invited of religious persons already in prosperous business or desirable positions."

I have thus given the results of historical research and the opinions of eminent scholars, and finding our position so well sustained and every contention of our denominational founders justified, we may from the standpoint of confirmed principle regard the Outlook for the Twentieth Century with confidence and with hope.

#### INDICATIONS OF FUTURE PROGRESS.

But there are three other grounds for confidence and hope in the future of Independent Methodism.

First, we are learning to show greater love and zeal for Independent Methodism by larger financial sacrifices for its propagation. I said some time ago that Independent Methodists have passed away whom God has greatly prospered and they have been enabled to leave £20,000, £30,000, and even £50,000, and yet the first gift of three figures to the Denomination had yet to be made. That statement is not applicable now. We have had more than one three-figure gift in recent years, and I hope God may influence some Brother or Sister who has the money to show love for Independent Methodism by a four-figure gift. It will be a day of inspiration for our principles when the first thousand pounds in one sum is given to our Denomination. We are improving in this matter, but not rapidly enough. We ought to complete the £5,000 fund by next



Christmas, and commence the century with the money in hand.

Has it ever occurred to you what sacrifices would have to be made in order to carry on this Connexion on the system of a paid Ministry? How many paid Ministers should we require for 150 Churches? One Minister for three Churches would call for 50. But we will not put the claim so high as that. Assume one paid Minister to six Churches, and he would be welcome to the task. That would require 25. And how much would you pay them? Schoolmasters receive £200 or more, and Ministers would expect more liberal remuneration than Schoolmasters. But set down £2 each per week all round. That would exhaust £2,500 a year. And if it were done, I venture to say in three years time the Churches would willingly pay the money to get quit of the men. That is what it would cost to violate our principles.

Now suppose we tried to carry out our principles thoroughly and fully. We say we love our principles and we will sacrifice as much for their propagation as other people do for theirs. But instead of devoting £2,500 to the payment of twenty-five Ministers to do service for others, give the same amount of money and employ twenty-five Evangelists in the Connexion! What would the result of that be in three years? I venture to say that both in existing and new Churches you would not have thirty or sixty, but one hundred-fold increase.



## BOTH MONEY AND SERVICE.

But raising money does not end loyalty to Independent Methodism. It is only the beginning of it. Independent Methodism has a still greater demand upon you than your money. In the Master's name and for the Master's cause Independent Methodism asks for your money and for your own selves besides. Hitherto a few men and women comparatively have given themselves to the work. As we all know, the burden and labour in many Churches rests upon a dozen or a score of people, and all the rest think they can come and go like the people of other congregations.

That is not Independent Methodism.

Independent Methodism means that every man and every woman is called to definite personal service for the welfare of the Church and the advancement of the Kingdom of Christ. Less than a score of people in every one of our Churches means that two or three thousand are working; whereas there should at least be 10,000 working for our Churches. Loyalty to Independent Methodism calls upon every member and everyone receiving good amongst us to give service in return for blessings received. I trust it is not expecting too much if we look forward to a more perfect and complete consecration of every man and woman amongst us in the opening months of the coming century. The great Simultaneous Mission of February 1901 is an occasion when mighty results may be achieved if we give ourselves to the work and fully respond to the call as we ought.



## DEMOCRATIC BUT NOT ANARCHIC.

Another important point I wish to speak of is this: The outlook for Independent Methodism is brighter because I think we are learning—slowly it may be—but still learning, to wisely use our liberty as Churches. Time was when it was thought a democratic Church meant a Church in which everyone could have his own way. Sad experience has proved that notion to be erroneous. Without proper recognition of authority the Church sinks into anarchy. Without leaders the efforts of the people lack direction and fail of their purpose. Nor does democracy mean every man leader in turn. That is a fallacious idea of democracy. If you were carrying on a mill or factory on democratic lines, you would choose the best man as manager, and not every man in turn. Should we not be equally careful in choosing our best men for leadership in the spiritual workshop of God? No nation would entrust the generalship of its army to every soldier in rotation. The Church is the Army of God and should be led by its most gifted and God-inspired men. In forecasting our work in the Twentieth Century I have faith that many past mistakes will be corrected. If the best men are chosen, and they lead where and when the Church as a whole decides to go, we may anticipate successes far excelling anything yet realized. Given these conditions, taking our stand more firmly than ever on the Rock Principle of Independent Methodism; prepared to make greater sacrifices than in the past; consecrating our service more fully; not seeking our own, but all



seeking the Kingdom of God, Independent Methodism may yet achieve no small share of the glorious task of winning the world for Christ.

Upon these lines the Outlook of Independent Methodism will be bright and glorious. It is not by harking back that we shall succeed, it is by going forward. It is not by holding Independent Methodism as an expedient, but by fighting for it as a great and worthy principle that we shall succeed. Our future depends upon it, and the great movements making for the salvation of the world depend upon it.

I speak to-night to many young Independent Methodists who will live to the middle of the Twentieth Century. I beg you to keep these thoughts in your hearts and memories, take up and hold aloft the banner of Independent Methodism until your hairs are grey, and then hand on the doctrines and principles and polity to the generation who may live to the end of that century, and on and on until the time comes of which the Prince of Prophets spoke, when Ministries shall cease, because it shall be no longer necessary for any man to say to his neighbour, "Know the Lord, for all shall know Him from the least unto the greatest."

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## XIII.—THE RE-UNION OF CHRISTENDOM.

[*Oldham*, 1895.]

The Re-union of Christendom is a great question, and for its solution will require a very long time. Some of these young people who have not yet chosen their sweethearts will be grandfathers and grandmothers before that question is settled. But that is no reason why we should not speak upon the question, rather is it a reason for dealing with it in order that we may understand it, and if possible accelerate progress towards its solution. In contemplating the Re-union of Christendom, several questions present themselves. Is the Re-union of Christendom possible? Is it desirable? Are there any signs pointing to its realization? And what should be the attitude of Christians and of Christian denominations towards each other in relation to this great question? I cannot hope to deal exhaustively with these questions in the short time allotted to me, but I may perhaps suggest a few thoughts which will aid our reflection and help to mature our judgment upon the subject. And first let us briefly glance at the subject historically, and ask ourselves the question,

## WAS CHRISTENDOM EVER UNITED?

Yes, Christendom was at one time united. All Christendom was united in the Upper Room at Jerusalem and on the day of Pentecost; and the effect of that unity was to secure the blessing of a mighty



outpouring of the Spirit of God, so powerful and exerting such widespread influence that it broke down the barriers of race, overcame the difficulties of varying languages, and effaced distinctions of religion, for the record says that people were converted from every nation under heaven. That beautiful spirit of unity did not, however, long prevail in the early Christian Church. As we read in the Epistles, there sprang up differences of opinion. There were Jews who, after their conversion to Christianity, desired to continue and impose upon others Jewish ceremonies and observances; these formed a party in the Church, and said: "We follow Peter." But the Gentile converts had no sympathy with Jewish ceremonials and they formed another party, and said: "We follow Paul." A third party in the Church said: "We follow Apollos," and a fourth: "We follow Cephas." But one important and significant fact should be borne in mind: although differences of opinion existed, and divergencies of faith, in the early Church,

#### THEY REMAINED ONE CHURCH.

They did not expel one another, nor split asunder. The Church was broad enough and tolerant enough to enable men who differed from each other to love and serve the Lord Jesus Christ, in whom they found a common centre and bond. It was not until the Church came under the wing of the secular power, and great religious hierarchies were established, that intolerance and persecution of Christians by Christians began, and



broke up the unity of the Church. Divisions proceeded attended with strife, contention, and often bitter hostility, until Christians who differed hated each other more than they hated sin and the powers of darkness. And to-day the condition of Christendom is deplorable. Not merely in the face of the foe, but in the midst of the battle, while the deadly conflict against sin is proceeding, the Christian Churches are divided, separated, isolated, paralysed, and Satan and all the forces of evil laugh at our weakness. Now I cannot believe this condition of things will continue for ever. I think the danger of it is growing more and more apparent to all earnest Christian minds. With vast combinations on the side of evil, the Christian Churches will be compelled to come closer together, and unite all the forces of God. The prayer of Jesus Christ will be answered: His followers will be one, as He is one with the Father, and the world will then know Him as the Son of God. Are there any signs of all this? Yes, I think there are numerous signs of a

#### MOVEMENT TOWARDS THE RE-UNION

of Christendom. I will briefly mention several. There is a decline of the polemic spirit in the Church. Discourses and addresses are less contentious than was the case a quarter of a century or more ago. A Methodist friend of mine said of a sermon he heard, "That sermon must have been written 25 or 30 years ago, for no preacher would assail the creed of another Christian Church in that manner to-day." Then there is also a



decline in the denominational spirit, I mean in the sense of the sectarian spirit. Philanthropies and benefactions are expected in these days to go beyond the narrow bounds of sectarianism, and extend their benefits to the whole community. There is a feeling that denominational areas are too narrow, and Christians want larger and wider spheres for their energies and activities than the boundaries of their own denominations. Again, the general trend of the age is towards great combinations, and the Christian Churches are sure to feel the influence of this spirit. Indeed the idea of the Re-union of Christendom has so far taken hold of the imagination of leading men in the Christian world that we see on many hands distinct efforts made to realize the consummation. Even that august personage the Pope of Rome is putting forth strong efforts to reunite Christendom. I do not dream that we can ever accept his conditions ; but the recent letter of the Pope of Rome marks an enormous advance when we compare it with documents issued by Popes one hundred years ago, directed at Christians of other communions than the Roman Catholic Church. The bishops of the Church of England are exceedingly anxious for the Re-union of Christendom, and a few years ago they formulated what are known as

#### THE LAMBETH PROPOSALS.

They suggested as bases of union : 1, the Word of God ; 2, the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds ; 3, the Sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper ; and



4, what they styled the historic episcopate. As regards the three proposals first named, Methodists and other Evangelical Churches would raise no objection; the fourth, so far as understood, is an insuperable barrier to union. But the point to notice is the attitude of the bishops and their evident desire on this question. Then we have had Grindelwald Meetings, Free Church Congresses, Methodist Ecumenical Conferences, and a host of evidences of Christian Churches co-operating together in Christian work and for the extension of Christ's Kingdom in a way that would have been impossible a generation ago. Not the least important sign of the growing spirit of Christian unity is to be found in the

#### HYMNALS OF THE VARIOUS CHURCHES.

Take our own hymn book for example—and the same is true of almost every denominational hymn book—where do we get our favourite hymns from? No denomination is content with hymns composed by poets of its own communion. Each is delighted to seize the best hymns, whatever sect the author may belong to. Thus in our own hymn book we have the hymn “O for a thousand tongues to sing,” from the Wesleyans; “Blest be the tie that binds,” from the Baptists; “Alas, and did my Saviour bleed,” from the Presbyterians; “Nearer, my God, to Thee,” from the Unitarians; “Hail to the Lord's Anointed,” from the Moravians; “Abide with me,” from the Church of England; and “Lead, kindly Light,” from the Roman



Catholics. We stand in our respective churches and chapels and worship together in songs of praise provided for us by the thoughts and words of men belonging to all sects and denominations; and if the Nineteenth Century has done so much as this, the Twentieth Century will fail in the expectations formed of it if this great work of Christian unity is not carried forward, and in addition to songs of praise the different denominations find themselves united in other devotional exercises, and more especially united in Christian work, on a scale the world has never seen, and in a spirit of unity which will bespeak a world's Pentecost.

#### DENOMINATIONAL CO-OPERATION, NOT COMPETITION.

I do not suggest that denominations will cease to exist. There is a distinct advantage and convenience in compact bodies of Christians whose ideas closely assimilate working and worshipping together in a Church capacity. What we want is that instead of denominations characterized by a spirit of competition and rivalry, we shall have denominations characterized by a spirit of co-operation and unity. A beautiful illustration of such unity is found in this meeting; it is the Annual Public Meeting of the Independent Methodist body, held in a Baptist Chapel, and presided over by a Congregationalist. Nor do I think that Christians will ever come together and unite on the basis of a creed or of a polity. I believe the only possible basis for the Re-union of Christendom is that of personal love and loyalty to Jesus Christ. You may have stood



on the summit of some mountain and seen separate and diverse streams flowing down that and neighbouring mountains. And as your eye followed the track of those streams, you have seen how they watered the earth and produced verdure and beauty wherever they flowed. But looking beyond the valley you have seen those streams coming together, and forming a river flowing on and on to the mighty sea. So let our denominational rills flow on in their course of blessing, but when denominational purposes have been served, let them come together and as one great Church move forward, carrying the Gospel to every land and every people, until the knowledge and glory of God shall cover the earth as the waters cover the sea.

#### LOVE AND MUTUAL ESTEEM.

Meanwhile, what should be the attitude of Christians towards each other, and of denominations towards other denominations? The best answer I can give you just now is contained in a few lines taken from a poem by Susan Coolidge on the Lantern in the Lighthouse. She had referred to the lantern, and she passed from that to the thought of the great light around us, and then to the still greater Light above.

No voice shall say, "I have the light,  
 All other eyes are dim;"  
 No hand the glory hold or hide  
 Which streams to ocean's rim;  
 None seize or claim one ray of his  
 More than belongs to him.  
 O Light of Truth! which lighteth all,  
 And shineth all abroad!  
 What favoured souls, or souls shall say,  
 "Mine is the only road?"  
 Each hath his own, to him made known,  
 And all lead up to God.



#### XIV.—THE ECUMENICAL METHODIST CONFERENCE AND LAY AGENCY.

The first great Conference of representatives from the various branches of Methodism in all parts of the world assembled in London, Wednesday, September 7th, 1881, concluding September 20th. The representatives of our own denomination were Mr. William Sanderson and myself. At the Annual Convention, held in Liverpool, September 30th, the subjoined important tributes to the value of lay agency given at the Conference were summarized in my address.

DR. SIMPSON, METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, U.S.

Lay preaching was one of the first and most successful of the peculiarities of Methodism. At its origination it was thought almost profane for one not episcopally, or at least clerically, ordained to exhort his fellow-men. The minister alone led the prayer-meeting or officiated in the pulpit. By the employment of lay preachers a class of men was called into active labour who had not enjoyed university or theological training. Some of them became diligent and successful students. Mr. Wesley termed Thomas Walsh the best Hebraist he ever knew, and says: "I never asked him the meaning of a Hebrew word but he could tell me how often it occurred in the Bible, and what it meant in each place." The fame of Dr. Adam Clarke became world-wide. These, however, were rare exceptions, even among those



who devoted their whole time to the ministry. The great majority of lay preachers worked for their daily bread, and were moved by a powerful impulse to preach without salary or reward. Some of them had few books besides the Bible, and they always appealed directly to it. All of them were Bible students. Their faith was frequently sublime. Without friends, without support, they went to the collieries and to the commons and to the outcasts of cities; and, in spite of interruptions and mobs, preached the unsearchable riches of Christ to multitudes who seldom, if ever, had entered a sanctuary. Probably no class of ministers since the Apostolic times had more implicit faith in the power of the Gospel applied to the human conscience. They expected awakenings or conversions under every sermon and they were seldom disappointed.

DR. M'TYEIRE, METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH,  
SOUTH.

The Conference in 1771 sent us two more Christians, one of whom made a deeper impression and a greater record of Christian labour than any other man has ever done on the American continent—Francis Ashbury. If we were indebted to old England for nothing else but Francis Ashbury our debt could never be paid. By the way, like Paul, he wrought at a trade—not at tent-making—but he wrought in iron, and there was a good deal of iron in him. I am told that the very anvil that received his honest strokes is somewhere in this kingdom, and if I am in time—I speak first—I should



like to get it. I am no relic worshipper, but I should like to get hold of that relic, and I would like to take it home to one of our theological schools. I do not know that I could work at it, but I should like to see if it could not hammer out a few more such men as he was.

HON. J. F. W. WHITE, METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

Without the assistance of lay helpers and lay preaching, Methodism would have died in its infancy, and John and Charles Wesley would never have been admitted into the company of England's illustrious sons in Westminster Abbey. In many districts of England, laymen—local preachers—prepared the way for Wesley and his regular helpers. In some places they broke up the hard soil, planted the first Gospel seed, and reaped the first fruit before Wesley came. A layman, aroused to a sense of duty by a pious woman, preached the first Methodist sermon and organized the first society in America. In an old rigging loft in New York, before less than a dozen souls, the Methodist standard was unfurled in the New World. From that little meeting the glad tidings of a free and full salvation for all, proclaimed by Philip Embury, and the songs of Charles Wesley, sung by Barbara Hick, went forth, feeble at first, but increasing in volume and power, until now they are heard in every valley and echo on every mountain of the continent. Local preachers, marching with the tide of emigration, carried the good news from the Atlantic to



the Pacific. When the followers of Wesley shall forget the traditions of the past, disparage and sneer at local preachers, think more of building fine churches and gathering in the fashionable and wealthy than of preaching the Gospel to the poor, the glory of Methodism will have departed. I think too much cannot be said in praise of thousands of poor men who, either as day-labourers or as artizans, work hard six days in the week, have but few books, prepare their sermons with great difficulty at night when their little children are playing around them in their living room, and yet these men Sunday after Sunday walk miles to preach the Gospel. All honour to such men who made Methodism. Aye, and their record is on high in golden letters before the throne of God.

MR. W. SHEPHERD ALLEN, M.P.

I appear here to-day as a local preacher of the Wesleyan Methodist Church, and I am here in all humility to maintain the position that lay preachers are essential to Methodism. I believe they have done very much to build up those great and noble Churches which are at the present day doing so much for the religion of England and America. I believe they have enabled the great Methodist Churches to take hold of and to influence for good the villages and the thinly-populated districts of England and America; and I believe they have also enabled those Churches to Christianize and to leaven with Gospel truth the masses of men in our large towns and great cities. A country



circuit with its twenty or thirty villages could not possibly be worked if it was not for the assistance afforded by lay preachers; and the town circuit with its three or four large chapels and its four or five small chapels, and its mission halls, likewise could not be worked if it were not for the assistance of lay preachers.

MR. S. D. WADDY, M.P., WESLEYAN METHODIST.

You are all lay preachers. Until the year 1822, when somebody chose to alter that tablet to the memory of John Wesley, and to substitute a new one, the words that were upon it were these—that he was “a patron and friend of lay preachers, by whose aid he extended the plan of itinerant preaching.” Somebody, by whose authority I do not care now to inquire, though I know pretty well, chose to take away that tablet and to have another in which the lay preachers are done away with, and it is altered to this—that he was the chief promoter and patron of the plan of “itinerant preaching.” You, Doctors of Divinity who wear your titles so honourably and so well; you, Doctors of Law; you, Bishops, whom we delight to receive, and to honour—you are all lay preachers according to that sense of the term—not ordained according to the notions of some Churches, but set apart. And that is the great point—we local preachers are not in that sense set apart. So some of you try to establish a distinction between us. You have too much of the uniform and the livery—I must be plain—of other Churches. By imitating clergymen, wearing



stiff collars and "M.B." waistcoats, you neither make yourself more respectable nor more respected. I venture to say that what we want now is not that more difference should be made, but that less difference should be made between the two. You say we are poor preachers; we do not enjoy a monopoly of that. I have met with a poor preacher elsewhere as well as amongst local preachers. I do not deny his existence; I would to God he were done away with. Do away with him—amongst us, I mean—make all us supernumeraries to pass through the mill again. I am ready to be examined to-morrow, and I am quite prepared to say that those local preachers who are not fit to take their places in any pulpit are not fit to be local preachers. Send local preachers to mission halls certainly; send travelling preachers too; send local preachers to commons by all means; but send also the travelling preachers; let there be fair play, equal work, equal rank, equal call in the sight of God Almighty. Lay hold upon some man who is almost within the reach of my arm at this moment, of the very best class of society in this country, lay hold of the merchants and professional men—men who can make capital speeches on political subjects if they like, professional men who are admirable speakers. Why do not you, young brethren, and some old ones, consecrate your work to God and go and preach?

ALD. SNAPE, UNITED METHODIST FREE CHURCH.

It has been forced of late on my mind that our local



preachers in the Methodist system are being rapidly outrun by the local preachers in some other church systems. The Baptists in the city from which I come have many, and they number some of the men best known in the city, in the mart, and the exchange; and I think it is time, with reference to our own local preachers, that a call should be made on the best men the Churches can produce to occupy our pulpits. Whilst Methodism appears to have been progressing rapidly, I very much fear that the method of our lay preaching has not progressed in a like ratio. We therefore need to have the cultured intellects of the Church. I think Mr. White will admit that those intellects, sanctified by the Spirit of God and glowing with the Love of Christ, can descend to congregations of the very poorest character, and preach to them with effect.

MR. J. TRAVIS, PRIMITIVE METHODIST.

The lay ministry is older than what is called the regular ministry. The old patriarchal fathers were lay preachers, and Noah was a ship carpenter, and yet he was a preacher of righteousness. Solomon, too, offered the consecration prayer at the dedication of the temple; and then we have as much apostolic authority for the employment of lay preaching as we have for any other kind of preaching. If you read history you will find that the Church—at least in its purest times—has recognized the importance of lay preaching. What a grand work they did in the Puritan revival! I think



myself, in some remarks that have been made, we have been putting the lay preacher a little bit too low. We are both called as regular preachers; we are both preachers of the Gospel; and in some periods of their history you will find that local preachers actually did administer the Sacraments. If they had not done so in the backwoods of America, the Sacraments never would have been administered on many occasions. I contend that, in proportion to the growth of Methodism, we are not keeping pace in the number of our local preachers. I question whether Methodism as a whole to-day has as many local preachers as it had ten years ago. Have not we during the last few years been complaining of diminution or small increase? Has the lack of local preachers nothing to do with this? I think we want local preachers in our best pulpits, in order that people may see what view men engaged in secular callings take of their duties. The non-employment of local preachers is not caused by there being nothing for them to do; for there are some large towns in England that have not a bit of Methodist agency. Other Churches are doing the work that God called Methodism to do; and, if we do not mind, Ichabod will in some respects be written on our churches. Why cannot we do work that the Salvation Army is doing? Why has that organization come into existence? It is because the Methodist Churches of this country have not attended to open-air evangelization as they ought to have done.



MR. E. LUMLEY, METHODIST NEW CONNEXION.

I think the fact that there are existing in the Methodist world eighty-four thousand local preachers, eighty-four thousand men that are standing, not as regularly appointed ministers, but as men whom God has called out to preach the Word of Life, and they have become recognized preachers of the everlasting Gospel, and thousands and tens of thousands of souls that are now in heaven, and thousands and tens of thousands of souls that are yet traversing this earth, and are doing in their own way and measure of ability what they can to forward the work of God in the world, are the fruits of the work of the local ministry—that fact, I think, is a sufficient justification for the existence of the system, and should make us cling and cleave to it, and never subordinate it to any instrumentality in the world.

MR. T. H. BAINBRIDGE, WESLEYAN METHODIST.

From the earliest times laymen have been Gospel pioneers. We read that among the disciples who were scattered abroad by persecution at Jerusalem there were men of Cyprus and Cyrene (unordained men—laymen) who went preaching the Word of God. When they reached Antioch they “spake unto the Grecians, preaching the Lord Jesus.” A great work of God was the result; and when the news came to Jerusalem the Church there sent one of its best men to see the work and report upon it, the ultimate result being that the centre of the Christian world (so far as aggressive work was



concerned) was changed from Jerusalem to Antioch. The early Methodist laymen were a similar class of men, and this accounts for Methodism constantly "breaking out" in fresh places, and for its being, as it now is, the largest English-speaking Protestant Church in the world. Our Church has largely increased in wealth, and with wealth has come the temptation to ease and self-indulgence. Probably no injunction is so much needed by our people at present as "Let him deny himself." Few things are more to be deplored amongst us than the fact that the aggressive work of the Church is left so much in the hands of the less efficient members of our Church. This matter is so serious, that unless our better educated people will give themselves more largely to earnest Christian work, we shall (in these times of improved education) have the bulk of our local preachers and Sunday School teachers ministering to those who are actually better informed than themselves. In former times, Methodism had secured the services of men of culture, of whom Dr. Hamilton, Samuel Drew, and Dr. George Smith were conspicuous examples. Methodism is suited only for earnest Christians. Our tests are so spiritual and experimental, that if a man has no real religion, they prove both awkward and distasteful. The class meeting, the prayer meeting, and the inquiry meeting, are exactly suited for what Mr. Spurgeon calls "red-hot Christians," but are entirely unsuitable for those who seem to think that it is *infra dig.* to do Christian work. There is something very impressive about the number



of Methodist lay-agents. According to the statistics (already presented) the number of our

Local Preachers	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	84,450
Sunday School Teachers	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	577,500
Class-leaders (counting one class-leader to 20 members)	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	240,000
Tract-distributors, cottage prayer-leaders, and visitors of the sick	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	100,000
								<hr/>
								1,001,950
								<hr/>

cannot be less than one million, and the bulk of those are engaged every week. What is wanted is to make the quality of the work commensurate with the quantity. If this were done, and each Methodist lay-worker had as a motive nothing short of personal love to Christ, and was directly inspired by the Holy Ghost, what mighty results we might expect.

MR. G. B. MCELROY, METHODIST PROTESTANT  
CHURCH, U.S.

When any branch of the Methodist family hushes the voice of her laity, she will, Sampson-like, have placed her head in a Delilah's lap, only to go forth as he did "weak as any other." The strength of any association of people for the accomplishment of the purposes of the union lies in the strength of the individual composing it—just as the strength of a rope is the aggregate of the strengths of the several strands. The real strength of a body of Christians united in Church associations is made up of what each furnishes—in the great Methodist rope, each member is a strand, or, at least, a



fibre, and as such he is expected to lend his strength, "Each for all, and all for each" should be his working motto. This consciousness that he has a work to do—a work that no one else can do, and on his doing of which very much depends—should be cherished and cultured by every true Methodist.





## XV.—EXCERPTS FROM VARIOUS SOURCES.

LUTHER.

“The ministry of the word is common to *all* Christians.”—

COLEMAN.

“The men of these (early Christian) days all accounted themselves the priests of God; and each, according to his ability, claimed the liberty, not only to teach and exhort, but even to administer the ordinances.”

GIBBON.

“In the year A.D. 200, we meet amongst the Christian writers with the first notice of the distinction between the Clergy and Laity, which was referred to by Tertullian as ‘a device of the Priesthood.’ ”

PROFESSOR MASSON.

“When doctrine has to be sold to enable its producer to go on producing more, there is a grievous chance that the doctrine sold, and the farther doctrine in preparation, will, more or less consciously, be of a kind to be saleable. True, the labourer even in doctrine is worthy of his hire, but he will labour perhaps better if he is in circumstances not to require any.”

DR. ARNOLD, OF RUGBY.

“In large towns many worthy men might be found able and willing to undertake the office of deacon out of pure love, if it were understood to be not necessarily



a step to the Presbyterian order and not incompatible with lay callings. You would get an immense gain by a great extension of the Church, by the softening down of that PESTILENT DISTINCTION BETWEEN CLERGY AND LAITY which is so closely linked with the priestcraft system, and by the actual benefits which such an additional number of ministers would ensure to the whole Christian congregation."

A MANCHESTER CONGREGATIONALIST.

"Is not the term 'Layman' a surrender of the vital principles on which Nonconformity is built, and for which it has suffered and died? I can understand the term in the Established Church, where Priests and Laymen are a distinct class. In my young days it was 'pastor and people;' now, alas! it is 'Reverend and Laymen.' Suppose in this Jubilee year we were just to retrace our steps and go back to those 'three principles' of Richard Fritz (1567) that you have so opportunely brought into print again, and have 'fyrste and formoste, the glorious worde and evangell preached not in bondage and subjection, but freely and purely.' I fancy it would be better and healthier in every way for all Congregational Churches, and the Union on its fiftieth birthday would be honoured and blessed in its deed. I would like to ask our much respected (not Priests or Reverends) pastors and teachers what they say and think to this."—*Manchester Guardian* correspondent.



## OLIVER CROMWELL.

. . . "I wonder not at differences of opinion, at discontents and divisions, where so anti-Christian and dividing a term as 'Clergy and Laity,' is given and received. A term unknown to any save the anti-Christian Church, and such as divide themselves from her; *Ab initio non fecit sic*. The most pure and primitive times as they best knew what true *union* was, so, in all addresses to the several Churches they wrote unto, not one word of this. The Members of the Churches are styled Brethren and Saints of the same household of Faith; and although they had orders and distinctions amongst them for administrations of ordinances, of a far different use and character from yours, yet it nowhere occasioned them to say *contemptum*, and by way of lessening in contradistinguishing 'Laity and Clergy.' It was your pride that begot this expression."—*M. D. Aubigne*.

## ROBERT BARCLAY ON THE RISE OF THE CLERGY.

. . . "Persecutions being over, and the Emperors and Princes coming under the name of Princes, the zeal of those great men was quickly abused by the covetousness of the Clergy, who soon learned to change their cottages with the palaces of Princes, and rested not until by degrees some of them came to be Princes themselves, nothing inferior to them in splendour, luxury and magnificence, a method of living that honest Peter and John, the fishermen, and Paul the tentmaker, never coveted; and perhaps as little



imagined that men, pretending to be their successors, should have arrived to these things; and so soon as the Bishops were thus seated and constituted, forgetting the life and work of a Christian, they went usually by the ears together about the precedency and revenues, each coveting the chiefest and fattest benefice."

J. J. GURNEY.

....." While we encourage a liberal and friendly feeling towards our fellow-Christians *of every denomination*—while we readily make allowances for the various circumstances and conditions in which they are placed—it is certain that we cannot be too faithful in upholding our own testimony against the paying and hiring of preachers. For have we not reason to believe that the farther the church of Christ on earth advances in her great career, the more generally will serious persons of other religious professions sympathize with our solicitude, that the contrivances of man may not be allowed to interfere with the work of God; that avarice, ambition, and selfishness, may be for ever excluded from the motives which lead Christians into the professed service of their divine Master; and that the standard may be more and more elevated among believers, of such a ministry of the gospel as shall be exclusively spiritual in its origin, and absolutely free in its operation?"

S. POPE, ESQ., Q.C., RECORDER OF BOLTON.

"He could not help thinking that where there was,



as in their case, sufficient enthusiasm and faith in one's own opinion to make themselves, so to say, the priests of their own religion, to enter into contact with the people around them, and by their own example and teaching to spread abroad the opinions they professed—he could not help thinking that that would have upon their own lives, as well as upon the conduct of those they might desire to influence, a much higher, and a much nobler, and a much more elevating influence than depending upon any body of men specially set apart in teaching that knowledge in which they were all commonly interested.”

P. RYLANDS, ESQ.

“An ecclesiastical system which professedly *depends* upon paid agency, which offers stated salaries in order to induce a supply of Christian labour, is inconsistent with Christ's spirit, and is certain to be followed by lamentable results. . . . We are told that without such a ministry, Christian effort would soon cease. Are we to be told that men will put forth their free and earnest efforts to abolish slavery, to subdue intemperance, to advance education, or to teach political economy, and that Christians alone will remain indifferent to the progress of *their* truths, and—unless salaried—will put forth no efforts for the religious elevation of mankind? The idea is preposterous. We should cast a slur upon our glorious faith to admit it for a moment. That Christians generally have been too little engaged in the work of their high vocation has been because the



system of priestcraft, in its various forms, has pressed down their energies, or diverted their zeal into channels of little practical importance. But the vast extent and mighty influence of individual effort in apostolic times proves its capabilities, and gives us confidence in the future."

DR. THOMAS.

"There is a sublime spirit of independency in these words: 'Ye yourselves know that these hands have ministered unto my necessities and to them that were with me.' This feeling must have been heightened by the fact that he knew that he had a divine claim to their temporal things (1 Cor. ix. 13-14), and also by the fact that on account of his influence over them, he might have extracted from them large portions of their property. Two thoughts are suggested here. 1. That it is a desirable thing for a minister to be secularly independent of his people. Why else does the apostle rejoice at it? The people who feel that their minister is dependent upon them are likely to take advantage of his poverty, and to misinterpret his act of purest generosity; and the minister who feels his dependency may come under a strong temptation to humour their prejudices, and under a painful sense of his own humiliation. 2. That a secular independence, therefore, every minister should endeavour to obtain. Any man with two healthy hands can do it and ought to do it. Agriculture, mechanics, trade, literature, medicine, law—the minister who wishes to be secularly



independent of his people may get his livelihood from some of these.”

HOUSE AND GLEBE AND £1 A DAY.

In Mr. C. E. Byles' life of Hawker of Morwenstow, are quoted not only the lines which that sturdy churchman and village autocrat cut in his vicarage wall, but also the comment upon them which a local satirist offered. These are Hawker's lines :

A House, a Glebe, a Pound a Day;  
A Pleasant Place to Watch and Pray,  
Be true to Church—be kind to Poor,  
O Minister! for evermore.

and this is the gloss of the parishioner, or more probably of a Dissenter smarting from some of Hawker's scorn for Nonconformists :

With all these benefits supplied,  
A pound a day, and more beside,  
How very good this man should prove,  
How full of zeal, how full of love!

But different the time we see,  
Since Jesus walked in Galilee,  
And did poor fishermen prepare  
His holy Gospel to declare.

Nor purse, nor scrip He bade them take,  
But preach the Gospel for His sake,  
And not a single word did say  
Of house, or glebe, or pound a day.

*Good Words*, 1905.



XVI.—LIST OF INDEPENDENT METHODIST  
CHURCHES.

LANCASHIRE.	Leigh—	St. Helens—
Ashton - in - Maker-	The Avenue,	Hamer Street,
field,	Bright Street,	Sutton,
Downall Green,	Liverpool—	Thatto Heath,
Stubshaw Cross,	Elizabeth Street,	Stretford,
Ashton-under-Lyne,	Tetlow Street,	Swinton—
Wellington Street,	Cochrane Street,	Moorside,
Aspull, near Wigan,	Goodison Road,	Trawden,
New Springs,	Lowton,	Tyldesley,
Atherton,	Low Green,	Urmston,
Barrowford.	Manchester—	Warrington—
Blacko,	Mill St., Bradford,	Friars Green,
Bolton—	Varley Street,	Brick Street (1)
Folds Road,	Morecambe.	Brick Street (2)
Noble Street,	Nelson —	Academy Street,
Chalfont Street.	Salem, Scotland	Bank Quay,
High Street,	Road,	Westhoughton —
Beverley Road,	Barkerhouse Rd,	Wingates,
Brierfield,	Bradshaw Street,	Dicconson Lane,
Burnley,	Larch Street,	Wigan—
Brynn,	Every Street,	Greenhough St.,
Chorley,	Oldham —	Kendal Street.
Cliviger,	George Street,	
Colne—	King Street,	
Burnley Road,	Smith Street,	
Waterside,	Broadway Street,	
Blucher Street,	Ross Street,	
Culcheth,	Pemberton—	
Farnworth,	Lamberhead Gr'n	
Golborne,	Mount Zion,	
Haggate,	Newtown,	
Haslingden,	Pendleton,	
Haydock,	Platt Bridge,	
Hindley,	Prescot,	
Horwich,	Radcliffe,	
Ince—	Risley,	
Keble Street,	Roe Green,	
James Street,	Salford—	
Spring View,	Unwin Street,	
Lancaster—	Skelmersdale,	
Nelson Street,	Southport—	
Wolsley Street,	Sussex Road,	
	High P'k, Church-	
	town,	
		CHESHIRE.
		Broadheath,
		Buerton,
		Cox Bank,
		Crewe,
		Fair Oak,
		Grappenhall,
		Haslington,
		Hazel Grove,
		High Legh,
		Little Neston,
		Lymm,
		Shavington,
		Stockport,
		Stockton Heath.



## YORKSHIRE.

Baildon Green,  
Barnoldswick,  
Batley,  
Bingley,  
Cleckheaton,  
Dewsbury,  
Emley,  
Flockton,  
Thornhill Edge,  
Thornhill Lees.

## LINCOLNSHIRE.

Grimsby.

LEICESTER-  
SHIRE.

Loughborough.

## SHROPSHIRE.

Hook Gate,  
Market Drayton.

## NORFOLK.

Great Yarmouth.

## NOTTINGHAM.

Aslockton,  
Bingham,  
Caythorpe,  
Kneeton,  
Lowdham,  
Nottingham—

Carlton Road,  
Sutton.

STAFFORD-  
SHIRE.

Kidsgrove.

## GLOUCESTER.

Bristol—

Ashton Gate,  
Bedminster,  
Bell Hill,  
Staple Hill,  
St. John's Lane,  
Warmley.

NORTHERN  
COUNTIES.

## DURHAM.

Bank Head,  
Baldon,  
Browney,  
Catchgate,  
Consett,  
Copley Bent,  
Darlington,  
Deptford,  
Easington Lane,  
East Howle,  
Gateshead,  
Haswell,  
Hetton-le-Hole,  
Houghton-le-  
Spring,  
Kip Hill,  
Murton.  
New Herrington,  
New Seaham,  
New Silksworth,  
Ryhope,  
Seaham Harbour,

Shildon,  
South Hetton,  
South Hylton,  
Spennymoor—  
Jubilee,  
Mount Pleasant,  
Sunderland—  
Bethany,  
Robert Street,  
James Williams  
Street,  
Warwick Street,  
Cairo Street,  
Trimdon Grange,  
West Cornforth.

NORTHUMBER-  
LAND.

Ashington,  
Bebside,  
Blyth,  
Newcastle—  
Pine Street,  
New Delaval.

## SCOTLAND.

Glasgow—  
Robson Street.

## WALES.

Talywain.  
Cymtillery.

## ISLE OF MAN.

Ramsey.

