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MINUTES

OF SEVERAL

CONVERSATIONS

BETWEEN THE

The REVEREND Messieurs

JOHN AND CHARLES WESLEY,

AND OTHERS.

L O N D O N :

Printed in the YEAR MDCCCLXX.

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10. Nor any who neglects paying his Subscription for four years together.

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

12. Let the fund never be reduced to less than an hundred pounds.

13. Let a Committee be named to see these Rules duly executed. The present Committee are,

Christopher Hopper.	Thomas Lee.
Robert Roberts.	Duncan Wright.
Thomas Coke.	Thomas Taylor.
Thomas Hanby.	William Thompson.
John Allen.	Thomas Rankin.

14. Let an exact account of all Receipts and Disbursements be produced at the Conference.

Let every Assistant bring to the Conference, the contribution of every Preacher in his Circuit.

Q. 54. Are not many of the Preachers' Wives still straitened for the Necessaries of Life?

A. Some certainly have been. To prevent this for the time to come,

1. Let every Circuit either provide each with a Lodging, Coals and Candles, or allow her fifteen pounds a year.

2. Let the Assistant take this money at the quarterly Meeting, before any thing else be paid out of it.

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

A. It may be owing either 1. To the want of Zeal and Exactness in *the Assistant*, occasioning Want of Discipline throughout: Or 2. To want of Life and Diligence in *the Preachers*; or 3. To our People's losing the Life of God, and sinking into the Spirit of the World.

It may be owing farther, to the want of more Field-preaching, and of trying more new Places: And now in particular, To their senseless Prejudice against the King, and speaking evil of dignities. To stop
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this

this flame, let none preach with us, who speak evil of our Governors, or prophesy evil to the nation. Let every Assistant take care of this.

Q. 56. But are all our Assistants themselves clear of this?

A. Who can testify the contrary? No one.

Q. 57. What can be done, in order to revive the work of God where it is decayed?

A. 1. Let every Preacher read carefully over the *Life of David Brainard*. Let us be *followers of him, as he was of Christ*, in absolute Self-devotion, in total Deadness to the World, and in fervent Love to God and man. Let us but secure this point, and the World and the Devil must fall under our feet.

2. Let both Assistants and Preachers be conscientiously exact in the whole *Methodist* Discipline.

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

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

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

4. Wherever you can, appoint Prayer-Meetings, and particularly on Friday.

5. Let a Fast be observed in all our Societies, on the last Friday in September, and on the Friday after New Year's-day, after Lady-day, and after Midsummer-day.

6. Be more active in dispersing the Books, particularly the *Sermon on the Good Steward*, on *Indwelling Sin*, the *Repentance of Believers*, and the *Scripture-Way of Salvation*. Every Assistant may give away small tracts. And he may beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

7. Strongly and explicitly exhort all Believers, to go on to perfection. That we may all speak the same thing, I ask once for all, Shall we defend this Perfection,

Perfection, or give it up? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby, (as we did from the beginning) Salvation from all sin, by the Love of God and Man filling our heart. The *Papists* say, "This cannot be attained, till we have been refined by the fire of Purgatory." The *Calvinists* say, "Nay, it will be attained as soon as the Soul and Body part." The *Old Methodists* say, "It may be attained *before* we die: a moment *after* is too late." Is it so or no? You are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin *before death*. The substance then is settled. But, as to the Circumstance, is the Change gradual or instantaneous? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are justified, there may be a gradual Sanctification, a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if sin cease before Death, there must, in the nature of the thing, be an Instantaneous Change. There must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not. "But should we in Preaching insist both on one and the other?" Certainly we must insist on the *gradual Change*; and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the Instantaneous also? If there be such a blessed Change before Death, should we not encourage all Believers to expect it? And the rather, because constant experience shews, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual work of God go on in their soul: The more watchful they are against all sin; the more careful to grow in grace, the more zealous of good works, and the more punctual in their attendance on all the ordinances of God. (Whereas just the contrary effects are observed, whenever this expectation ceases.) They are *saved by hope*, by this hope of a total Change, with a gradually-increasing salvation. Destroy this hope, and that Salvation stands still or rather decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the gradual Change in Believers, should strongly insist on the Instantaneous.

Q. 58. What can be done, to increase the work of God in *Scotland*?

- A. 1. Preach abroad as much as possible :
 2. Try every town and village :
 3. Visit every member of the Society at home :
 4. Let the Preachers at *Dundee* and *Arbroth*, not stay at either place more than a week at a time :
 5. Let each of them once a quarter visit *Perth*, *Dunkeld*, and the intermediate villages.

Q. 59. What can be done in order to the future Union of the Methodists?

A. 1. It has long been my desire, that all those Ministers of our Church who believe and preach Salvation by Faith, might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder but help one another. After occasionally pressing this in private Conversation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts upon the head, and sent them to each of them in a Letter. Out of almost Sixty to whom I wrote, only three vouchsafed me an Answer. So I give this up. They are a rope of sand: And such they will continue.

2. But it is otherwise with the *travelling Preachers* in our connexion. You are at present One Body. You act in concert with each other, and by united counsels. And now is the time to consider what can be done, in order to continue this Union. Indeed as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty: I am, under God, a Center of Union to all our *travelling*, as well as *local* Preachers. They all know me and my communication. They all love me for my works' sake: And therefore, were it only out of regard to *me*, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this Connexion be preserved, when it pleases God to remove me from you?

3. I take it for granted, it cannot be preserved by any means, between those who have not a single eye: Those that aim at any thing but the Glory of God in the salvation of men; who desire or seek any earthly thing, whether Honour, Profit or Ease, will

will not remain in the connexion: It will not answer their design. Some of these, perhaps a Fourth part of the whole number, will procure Preferment in the Church: Others will turn Independents and get separate Congregations. Lay your accounts with this. And be not surprized, if some be among them, whom you now least of all suspect.

4. But what method can be taken to preserve a firm Union between those who chuse to remain together?

Perhaps you might take some such steps as these.

On notice of my Death, let all the Preachers in Britain and Ireland repair to London within six weeks.

Let them seek God by solemn Fasting and Prayer.

Let them draw up Articles of Agreement, to be signed by those who chuse to act in concert.

Let those who do not chuse it, be dismiss'd in the most friendly manner possible.

Let them chuse by votes, a Committee of Three, Five or Seven, one of them to be Moderator:

Let this Committee propose Preachers to be tried, admitt'd, or excluded; fix the place of each Preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of the next Conference.

5. Can any thing be done now, in order to lay a foundation for this future Union? Would it not be well, for any that are willing to sign some Articles of Agreement, before God calls me hence? Suppose the following:

“We whose names are under-written, being thoroughly convinced of the Necessity of a close Union between those whom God is pleas'd to use as instruments in this glorious Work, in order to preserve this Union between ourselves, are resolv'd, God being our Helper,

I. To devote ourselves entirely to God; denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing, to save our own souls, and them that hear us:

II. To preach the old Methodist-Doctrines; and no other, contained in the Minutes of the Conferences:

D. 3

III. To

III. To observe and enforce the whole *Methodist Discipline*, laid down in the said Minutes.

Q. 60. How many Circuits are there now?

A. Of *America* we have no late account. There are six and forty Circuits in *England*, four in *Scotland*, and fourteen in *Ireland*.

Q. 61. Are our Preaching-houses safe?

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

Q. 62. What then is to be done?

A. 1. Let those who have debts on any of the Houses give a Bond, to settle them as soon as they are indemnified.

2. Let the surviving Trustees chuse others without delay, by indorsing their deed thus:

“We the remaining Trustees of the Methodist Preaching-house in _____, do according to the power vested in us by this deed, chuse _____ to be Trustees of the said house, in the place of _____
Witness our hands _____.”

N. B. The Deed must have three New Stamps, and must be enrolled in Chancery within six months.

Q. 63. In what form may an House be settled?

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

“This Indenture made _____
between *Benjamin Heap*, of _____, in the County of _____, on the one part, and *Thomas Philips, Hatter, &c.* on the other part, WITNESSETH, That in consideration of five Shillings, lawful money of *Great Britain*, by the said *T. P. &c.* to the said *B. H.* truly paid, before the sealing and delivering hereof (the receipt whereof the said *B. H.* doth hereby acknowledge) and for divers other considerations him thereunto moving; the said *B. H.* hath granted, bargained and sold, and by these Presents doth bargain and sell, unto the said *T. P. &c.* their Heirs and Assigns for ever, All that lately erected

erected House or Tenement, with the Yard thereunto adjoining, situate _____ in _____ aforesaid, now in the tenure or occupation of _____, together with all the ways, drains and privileges to the said premises appertaining, and all the profits thereof, with all the right, title and interest in law and equity: To HAVE AND TO HOLD, the said House, Yard, and other premises, to the said T. P. &c. their Heirs and Assigns for ever. NEVERTHELESS upon special trust and confidence, and to the intent that they and the Survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do and shall permit *John Wesley*, of the City Road, London, Clerk, and such other persons as he shall from time to time appoint, and at all times, during his natural Life, and no other persons, to have and enjoy the free use and benefit of the said premises; that the said *John Wesley*, and such other persons as he appoints, may therein preach and expound God's holy Word: And after his decease, upon farther trust and confidence, and to the intent that the said Trustees and the Survivors of them, and the Trustees for the time being, do and shall permit *Charles Wesley*, late of Christ Church, Oxford, Clerk, and such other persons as he shall from time to time appoint, during his Life, and no other, to have and enjoy the said premises for the purposes aforesaid. And after his decease, upon farther trust and confidence, and to the intent that the said T. P. &c. or the major part of them, or the Survivors of them, and the major part of the Trustees of the said premises for the time being, shall from time to time, and at all times for ever, permit such persons as shall be appointed at the yearly Conference of the People called *Methodists*, in London, Bristol or Leeds, and no others, to have and to enjoy the said premises, for the purposes aforesaid: Provided always, that the said persons preach no other Doctrine than is contained in Mr. *Wesley's* Notes upon the New Testament, and four Volumes of Sermons: And upon farther trust and confidence, that as often as any of these Trustees, or the Trustees

Trustees for the time being, shall die, or cease to be a member of the Society commonly called *Methodists*, the rest of the said Trustees, or of the Trustees for the time being, as soon as conveniently may be, shall and may chuse another Trustee or Trustees, in order to keep up the number of — Trustees for ever. In witness whereof the said *B. H.* hath hereunto set his hand and seal, the day and year above-written.”

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

Q. 64. But is this form a safe one? Should we not have the opinion of a Council upon it?

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

Q. 65. Is any thing farther advisable with regard to Building?

A. 1. Build all Preaching-houses, where the ground will permit, in the Octogan form. It is best for the voice, and on many accounts more commodious than any other. 2. Why should not any Octogan House be built after the model of *Yarm*? Any Square House, after the model of *Bath* or *Scarborough*? Can we find any better model? 3. Let the Roof rise only one third of its breadth: this is the true proportion. 4. Have Doors and Windows enough: And let all the Windows be Sashes, opening downward: 5. Let there be no Chinese Paling, and no Tub-Pulpit, but a square Projection with a long Seat behind: 6. Let there be no Pews and

and no Backs to the Seats, which should have Isles on each side, and be parted in the middle by a rail running all along, to divide the Men from the Women: Just as at *Bath*. 7. Let all Preaching-houses be built plain and decent; but not more expensively than is absolutely unavoidable: Otherwise the necessity of raising money will make Rich men necessary to us. But if so, we must be dependent upon them, yea and governed by them. And then farewell to the Methodist Discipline, if not Doctrine too. 8. Wherever a Preaching-house is built, see that Lodgings for the Preachers be built also.

Q. 66. Is there any Exception to the Rule, "Let the Men and Women sit apart?"

A. In those Galleries where they have always sat together, they may do so still. But let them sit apart every where below, and in all New-Erected Galleries.

Q. 67. But how can we secure their sitting apart here?

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

Q. 68. But there is a worse indecency than this creeping in amongst us, Talking in the Preaching-houses, before and after Service? How shall this be cured?

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

Q. 69. Complaint has been made that Sluts spoil our Houses. How may we prevent this?

A. Let none that has spoiled One, ever live in another. But what a shame is this? A Preacher's
Wife

Wife should be a pattern of Cleanliness, in her Person, Cloaths and Habitation. Let nothing flatterly be seen about her; No rags; no dirt; no litter. And she should be a pattern of Industry: Always at work, either for herself, her husband, or the Poor. I am not willing any should live in the Orphan-house at *Newcastle*, or any Preaching-house, who does not conform to this Rule.

Q. 70. It has been complained also, that people crowd into Preaching-houses, as into Coffee-houses, without any invitation. Is this right?

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

Q. 71. May any New Preaching-houses be built?

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

Q. 72. What can be done to make the *Methodists* sensible of the Excellency of *Kingswood-School*?

A. Let every Assistant read the following account of it yearly in every Congregation.

1. The Wisdom and Love of God have now thrust out a large number of Labourers into his harvest: Men who desire nothing on earth but to promote the Glory of God, by saving their own souls and those that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual things, are willing to minister to them of their carnal things; so that they have food to eat, and raiment to put on, and are content therewith.

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

3. Yet one considerable difficulty lies on those that have Boys, when they grow too big to be under

der their Mother's direction. Having no Father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand temptations. To remedy this, we have a School on purpose for them, wherein they have all the instruction they are capable of, together with all things necessary for the Body, Cloaths only excepted. And it may be, if God prosper this labour of love, they will have these too shortly.

4. In whatever view we look upon this, it is one of the noblest Charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the Institution? Is it fit that the Children of those who leave Wife, and all that is dear, to save souls from death, should want what is needful either for soul or body? Ought not we to supply what the Parent cannot, because of his labours in the Gospel? How excellent are the effects of this Institution? The Preacher eased of this weight, can the more chearfully go on in his labour. And perhaps many of these Children may hereafter fill up the place of those that shall *rest from their labours*.

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

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

7. All

7. All of *you*, who are thus minded, have an Opportunity now of shewing your Love to the Gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest Charities in the World. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent Designs that ever was set on foot in this Kingdom. Do what you can to comfort the Parents, who give up their all for you, and to give their Children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer for what you do on such an Occasion. God is a good Pay-master. And you know, in doing this, you *lend unto the Lord: In due time HE shall pay you again.*

Q. 73. But how can we keep out of Debt?

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

Q. 74. How may we raise a General Fund for carrying on the whole Work of God?

A. By a Yearly Subscription to be proposed by every Assistant when he visits the Classes at *Christmas*, and received at the Visitation following.

To this End he may then read and enlarge upon the following Hints in every Society.

“ 1. Within these thirty Years several of our Brethren in various Parts, having no Room which would contain the Congregation, by the Advice of the Preachers have built Houses for Preaching, capable of containing the usual Number of Hearers: But this has necessarily involved them in large debts. This the Societies to whom those Houses belong, are by no means able to pay: But the whole Body of Methodists joining together can do it without Inconvenience. Only let them cheerfully exert on so pressing an Occasion the Ability which God hath given them.

2. But how shall we send Labourers into those Parts, where they are most of all wanted? Suppose the North-West of *Ireland*, and the North of *Scotland*? Many are willing to hear; but not to bear the Expence. Nor can it as yet be expected of them;

them : stay till the word of God has touched their hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon us, in the mean time, to supply their lack of service? To raise a General Fund out of which from time to time that Expence may be defrayed? By this means, those who willingly offer themselves may travel through every part, whether there are Societies or not, and stay wherever there is a Call, without being burdensome to any. Thus may the Gospel, in the Life and Power thereof, be spread from Sea to Sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your Mite, to promote this glorious work?

Besides these, in carrying on so large a Work through the three Kingdoms, there are calls for money in various ways, and we must frequently be at considerable expence, or the work must be at a full stop. Many too are the occasional Distresses of our Preachers or their Families, which require an immediate supply. Otherwise their hands would hang down, if they were not constrained to depart from the work.

3. Let then every member of our Society once a year, set his shoulder to the work; contributing more or less as God hath prospered him, at the *Lady-Day* Visitation of the Classes. Let none be excluded from giving something, be it a penny, a half-penny, a farthing. Remember the Widow's two mites! And let those who are able to give shillings, crowns, and pounds, do it willingly. The money contributed will be brought to *Leeds*, *Bristol*, or *London*, at the ensuing Conference.

4. Men and Brethren, help! Was there ever a Call like *this*, since you first heard the Gospel-Sound? Help to relieve your Companions in the Kingdom of Jesus, who are prest above measure. "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ." Help to send forth able, willing Labourers into your Lord's Harvest: So shall ye be assistant in saving Souls from death, and hiding a multitude of Sins. Help to spread the Gospel of

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your Salvation into the remotest corners of the Kingdom, till "the Knowledge of our Lord shall cover the Land, as the Waters cover the Sea." So shall it appear to ourselves, and all men, that we are indeed one Body, united by one Spirit; so shall the baptized Heathens be yet again constrained to say, "See how these Christians love one another."

In this, may not even the Romanists provoke us to jealousy? They have a General Fund at *Rome*, and another at *Paris*, which bears all the Expences of their Missionaries throughout all the world.

Q. 75. What is the direct Antidote to *Metho-
dism* (the Doctrine of Heart-Holiness:)

A. *Calvinism*: All the Devices of Satan for these forty years, have done far less toward stopping this Work of God, than that single Doctrine. It strikes at the root of Salvation from Sin, previous to glory, putting the matter on quite another issue.

Q. 76. But wherein lie the Charms of this Doctrine? What makes men swallow it so greedily?

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

2. It is highly pleasing to flesh and blood, Final Perseverance in particular.

Q. 77. What can be done, to guard against it?

A. 1. Let all our Preachers carefully read over *Our's* and *Mr. Fletcher's* Tracts.

2. Let them frequently and explicitly preach the truth, though not in a controversial way. But let them take care to do it in Love and Gentleness: Not in bitterness, not returning railing for railing: Let *Mr. R—* and *R—H—*, and their Associates, have all this to themselves.

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

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

5. Answer

5. Answer all their Objections, as occasion offers, both in public and private. But take care to do this, with all possible Sweetness both of Look and of Accent.

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

7. Make it matter of constant and earnest Prayer, That God would stop the Plague.

Q. 78. We said in 1744, "We have leaned too much toward Calvinism." Wherein?

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

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

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

Once more review the whole Affair:

1. Who of us is *now* accepted of God?

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

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

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

3. Is this the same with He that is *sincere*?

Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this *Salvation by works*?

Not by the *merit* of Works, but by works as a *Condition*.

5. What

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

I am afraid, *about words*: (Namely, in some of the foregoing instances.)

6. As to *Merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded *according to our works, yea, because of our works*. How does this differ from *for the sake of our works*? And how differs this from *Secundum merita operum*? Which is no more than, *as our works deserve*? Can you split this hair? I doubt, I cannot.

7. The grand objection to one of the preceding Propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those, who by their own confession neither *feared God, nor wrought righteousness*. Is this an Exception to the general Rule?

It is a doubt, whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own thinking so is not proof. For we know, how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.

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

F I N I S.

MINUTES, &c.

JUNE 25, 1744, &c.

IT is desired, That all Things be considered as in the immediate Presence of God.

That we may meet with a single Eye, and as little Children, who have every thing to learn :

That every Point which is proposed, may be examined to the Foundation :

That every Person may speak freely whatever is in his Heart :

And that every Question which may arise, should be thoroughly debated and settled. Mean time let us all pray for a Willingness to receive Light, to know of every Doctrine, whether it be of God.

Q. 1. How may the Time of this Conference be made more eminently a Time of Watching unto Prayer ?

A. 1. While we are conversing, let us have an especial Care, to set God always before us :

2. In the intermediate Hours, let us visit none but the Sick, and spend all the Time that remains in Retirement :

3. Let us therein give ourselves to Prayer for one another, and for a Blessing on this our Labour.

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Q. 2.

Q. 2. How far does each of us agree to submit to the Judgment of the Majority?

A. In speculative Things each can only submit, so far as his Judgment shall be convinced :

In every practical Point each will submit, so far as he can without wounding his Conscience.

Q. 3. Can a Christian submit any farther than this, to any Man, or Number of Men upon Earth?

A. It is plain he cannot, either to Bishop, Convocation or General Council. And this is that grand Principle of private Judgment, on which all the Reformers proceeded; "Every Man must judge for himself; because every Man must give an Account of himself to God."

Q. 4. What may we reasonably believe to be God's Design in raising up the Preachers called *Methodists*?

A. To reform the Nation, particularly the Church; and to spread scriptural Holiness over the Land.

Q. 5. What was the Rise of *Methodism*, so called?

A. In 1729, two young Men reading the Bible, saw they could not be saved without Holiness, followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737 they saw, Holiness comes by Faith. They saw likewise, that Men are justified before they are sanctified: but still Holiness was their Point.

God then thrust them out, utterly against their Will, to raise an holy People. When Satan could no otherwise hinder this, he threw *Calvinism* in the Way; and then *Antinomianism*, which strikes directly at the Root of all Holiness.

Then many of the *Methodists* growing rich, became Lovers of the present World. Next they married unawakened or half awakened *Wives*, and conversed with their Relations. Hence worldly *Prudence*, *Maxims*, *Customs*, crept back upon them, producing more and more *Conformity to the World*.

Hence followed gross Neglect of *relative Duties*, especially *Education of Children*. And this is not easily cured by the Preachers. Either they have not *Light*,

or

or not *Weight* enough. But the Want of both may in some measure be supplied, by publickly reading *the Sermons* every where, particularly the fourth Volume.

Q. 6. Is it adviseable to preach in as many Places as we can, without forming any Societies ?

A. By no means : we have made the Trial in various Places ; and that for a considerable Time. But all the Seed has fallen as by the Way-side : there is scarce any Fruit of it remaining.

Q. 7. But what particular Inconveniences do you observe, where Societies are not formed ?

A. These among others ; 1. The Preachers cannot give proper Instructions and Exhortations to those that are conviaced of Sin : 2. They cannot watch over one another in Love ; nor, 3. Can the Believers bear one another's Burdens, and build up each other in Faith and Holiness.

Q. 8. Where should we endeavour to preach most ?

A. 1. Where we (Clergymen) are permitted to preach in a Church ; 2. Where there is the greatest Number of quiet and willing Hearers ; 3. Where there is most Fruit.

Q. 9. Is Field-preaching then unlawful ?

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

Q. 10. Have we not used it too sparingly ?

A. It seems we have : 1. Because our Call is, To save that which is lost. Now we cannot expect such to seek us. Therefore we should go and seek them. 2. Because we are particularly called, by going into the Highways and Hedges (which none else will) to compel them to come in. 3. Because that Reason against it is not good, "The House will hold all that come." The House may hold all that come to the House, but not all that would come to the Field.

The greatest Hindrances to this you are to expect from the rich, or cowardly, or lazy *Methodists*. But regard

regard them not, neither Stewards, Leaders nor People: Whenever the Weather will permit, go out in God's Name into the most public Places, and call all to *repent, and believe the Gospel*; every Sunday in particular: especially in the old Societies, lest they settle upon their Lees.

Q. 11. Ought we not diligently to observe, in what Places God is pleased at any Time to pour out his Spirit more abundantly?

A. We ought, and at that Time to send more Labourers than usual into that Part of the Harvest.

Q. 12. What is a sufficient Call to a new Place?

A. 1. An Invitation from a serious Man, fearing God, who has an House to receive us: 2. A Probability of doing more Good by going thither, than by staying longer where we are.

Q. 13. How often shall we permit Strangers to be present, at the Meeting of the Society?

A. Let every other Meeting of the Society, in every Place, be strictly private; no one Stranger being admitted, on any Account or Pretence whatsoever. On the other Nights we may admit them with Caution; but not the same Persons above twice or thrice. In order to this, see that all in every Place shew their Tickets before they come in. If the Stewards and Leaders are not exact and impartial herein, employ others which have more Resolution.

Q. 14. May a Relapser into gross Sin, confessing his Fault, be re-admitted into the Society?

A. Not as a Member, till after three Months: but he may be permitted to stay as a Stranger.

Q. 15. How may the Leaders of Classes be made more useful?

A. 1. Let each of them be diligently examined concerning his Method of meeting a Class.

2. Let us recommend to all the following Directions;

1. Let

1. Let each Leader carefully inquire, How every Soul in his Class prospers? Not only, How each Person observes the outward Rules, but how he grows in the Knowledge and Love of God.
2. Let the Leaders converse with all the Preachers, as frequently and as freely as possible.
3. Let every Leader come into the Room on *Tuesday*, as soon as the Service is ended, and then sit down, and commune with God in his Heart till the Preacher comes in.
4. Let no Leader go out till the Preacher goes.
5. Let none speak there, but the Preacher or the Steward, unless in Answer to a Question
6. Let every Leader bring a Note of every sick Person in his Class.
7. Let every Leader send the same Note to the Visiter of the Sick Weekly.

Q. 16. Can any thing farther be done, in order to make the Meetings of the Classes lively and profitable?

A. 1. Let the Leaders frequently meet each other's Classes.

2. Let us observe, which Leaders are most useful to those under their Care. And let these meet the other Classes as often as possible.

Q. 17. How can we farther assist those under our Care?

A. 1. By closely examining them at each Visitation :

2. By meeting the married Men and Women together, on the first *Sunday*, after the Visitation, the single Men and Women apart, on the two following.

3. By instructing them at their own Houses.

What unspeakable Need is there of this? The World says, "The Methodists are no better than other People." This is not true. Yet it is nearer the Truth, than we are willing to imagine.

For, 1. Personal-Religion, either toward God or Man, is amazingly superficial among us.

I can but juſt touch on a few Generals. How little Faith is there among us? How little Communion with God? How little living in Heaven, walking in Eternity, Deadneſs to every Creature? How much Love of the World, Deſire of Pleaſure, of Eaſe, of Praise, of getting Money?

How little Brotherly-Love? What continual Judging one another? What Goffipping, Evil-speaking, Tale-bearing? What want of Moral Honesty? To inſtance only in a few Particulars:

What Servants, Journey-men, Labourers, Carpenters, Bricklayers, do as they would be done by? Which of them does as much Work as he can? Set him down for a Knave that does not.

Who does as he would be done by, in buying and ſelling, particularly in ſelling Horſes? Write him Knave that does not. And the Methodiſt-Knave is the worſt of all Knaves.

2. Family Religion is ſhamefully wanting, and almoſt in every Branch.

And the Methodiſts in general will be little better, till we take quite another Courſe with them. For what avails Public Preaching alone, though we could preach like Angels?

I heard Dr Lupton ſay, My Father, viſiting one of his Pariſhioners, who had never miſſed going to Church for forty Years, then lying on his Death-bed, aſked him, "Thomas, where do you think your Soul will go?" "Soul! Soul!" ſaid Thomas: "Yes; Do not you know what your Soul is?" "Aye ſurely," ſaid he: "Why, it is a little Bone in the Back, that lives longer than the reſt of the Body." So much Thomas had learned by often hearing Sermons, yea and exceeding good Sermons, for forty Years!

We muſt inſtruct them *from Houſe to Houſe*: Till this is done, and that in good Earneſt, the Methodiſts will be little better than other People.

Can we find a better Method of doing this than Mr Baxter's? If not, let us adopt it without Delay. His whole Tract, intitled, *Gildas Salvianus*, is well worth

worth a careful Perusal. A short Extract from it I have subjoined. Speaking of this visiting from House to House, he says, page 351.

“ We shall find many Difficulties both in ourselves and in the People.

1. In ourselves there is much Dulness and Laziness: So that there will be much ado to get us to be faithful in the Work.

2. We have also a base Man-pleasing Temper, which makes us let Men perish, rather than lose their Love, and let them go quietly to Hell, lest we should anger them.

3. Some of us have also a foolish Rashfulness. We know not how to begin, or to speak plain. We blush to speak for Christ, or to contradict the Devil, or to save a Soul.

4. Our Interest stops our Mouths, and makes us unfaithful in the Work of Christ.

5. But the greatest Hindrance is, Weakness of Faith: So our whole Motion is weak, because the Spring of it is weak.

6. Lastly, We are unskilful in the Work. How few know how to deal with Men, so as to get within them, to win upon them, and suit all our Discourse to their several Conditions and Tempers; to choose the fittest Subjects, and follow them with an holy Mixture of Seriousness, and Terror, and Love, and Meekness, and evangelical Allurements?”

And we have as many Difficulties to grapple with in our People:

1. Too many of them will be unwilling to be taught, till we conquer their Perverseness by the Force of Reason, and the Power of Love.

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

3. And it is still harder, to fix things on their Heart, without which all our Labour is lost. If you have not therefore great Seriousness and Fervency, what Good

can you expect? And when all is done, it is the Spirit of Grace, he alone, who must do the Work.

4. And when we have made some Impressions upon their Hearts, if we look not after them, they will soon die away.

But as great as this Labour of private Instruction is, it is absolutely necessary. For after all our preaching, many of our People are almost as ignorant as if they had never heard the Gospel. I study to speak as plain as I can; yet I frequently meet with those who have been my Hearers for many Years, who know not, whether Christ be God or Man; or, that Infants have any Original Sin. And how few are there, that know the Nature of Repentance, Faith and Holiness? Most of them have a Sort of Confidence, that Christ will justify and save them, while the World has their Hearts, and they live to themselves. And I have found by Experience, that one of these has learned more from an Hour's close Discourse, than from ten Years public Preaching.

And undoubtedly this private Application is implied in those solemn Words of the Apostle; *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his Appearing, preach the Word, be instant in Season, out of Season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all Long-suffering and Doctrine.*

This is likewise necessary to the greater Glory of God, by the fuller Success of the Gospel. O Brethren, if we could generally set this Work on foot in all our Societies, and prosecute it skilfully and zealously, what Glory would redound to God thereby? If the common Ignorance were thus banished, and our Vanity and Idleness turned into the Study of the Way of Life, and every Shop and every House busied in speaking of the Word and Works of God: Surely God would dwell in our Habitations, and make them his Delight.

And this is necessary to the Welfare of our People, many of whom neither believe nor repent to this Day. Look round about, and see how many of them are still in apparent Danger of Damnation! And how can you
walk

walk, and talk, and be merry with such People, when you know their Case? Methinks when you look them in the Face, you should break forth into Tears, as the Prophet did when he looked upon *Hazael*, and then set on them with the most vehement and importunate Exhortations. O then for God's sake, and for the sake of poor Souls, bestir yourselves, and spare no Pains that may conduce to their Salvation!

What Cause have we to bleed before the Lord this Day, that have so long neglected this great and good Work? That have been Preachers so many Years, and have done so little by personal Instructions for the saving of Mens Soul? If we had but set on this Work sooner, how many more might have been brought to Christ? And how much holier and happier might we have made our Societies before now? And why might we not have done it sooner? There were many Hindrances in the Way: And so there are still, and always will be. But the greatest Hindrance was in ourselves, in our Dulness, and Littleness of Faith and Love. O that God would throughly humble us, and cause us to bewail our own Neglects; that we may not think it enough to lament the Sins of others, while we overlook our own!

But it is objected, I. This Course will take up so much Time, that we shall have no Time to follow our Studies.

I answer, 1. Gaining Knowledge is a good Thing; but saving Souls is a better. 2. By this very Thing you will gain the most excellent Knowledge of God and Eternity. 3. But you will have abundant Time for gaining other Knowledge too, if you spend all your Mornings therein. Only sleep not more than you need; talk not more than you need; and never be idle, nor triflingly employed. But, 4. If you can do but one, either follow your Studies, or instruct the Ignorant. Let your Studies alone; I would throw by all the Libraries in the World, rather than be guilty of the Perdition of one Soul.

It

It is objected, II. "The People will not submit to
 "it." If some do not, others will gladly. And the
 Success with them may be so much as to repay all
 our Labour. O let us herein follow the Example of
 St Paul. 1. For our general Business, *Serving the Lord
 with all Humility of Mind.* 2. Our special Work, *Take
 heed to yourselves, and to all the Flock.* 3. Our Doctrine,
*Repentance toward God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus
 Christ.* 4. The Place and Manner of Teaching, *I
 have taught you publickly, and from House to House.* 5.
 The Object and internal Manner, *I ceased not to warn
 every one, Night and Day, with Tears.* This it is that
 must win Souls and preserve them. 6. His Innocency
 and Self denial for the Advantage of the Gospel, *I
 have coveted no Man's Silver or Gold.* 7. His Patience,
Neither count I my Life dear unto myself. And among
 all our Motives, these should be ever before our Eyes:
 1. *The Church of God, which he hath purchased with his
 own Blood.* 2. *Grievous Wolves shall enter in: yea, of
 your own selves shall Men arise, speaking perverse Things.*
 Write all this upon your Hearts, and it will do you
 more Good than twenty Years study of lower Things.

We may, 1. Every Preacher, take an exact Catalogue
 of those in Society, from one End of each Town to the
 other. 2. Go to each House, and give, with suitable
 Exhortation and Direction, the "Instructions for Chil-
 dren." 3. Be sure to deal gently with them, and
 take off all Discouragements as effectually as you can.
 See that the Children get these by Heart. Advise the
 grown Persons to see that they understand them. And
 enlarge upon and apply every Sentence as closely as
 you can. And let your Dealing with those you begin
 with, be so gentle, winning and convincing, that the
 Report of it, may move others to desire your coming.
 True, it is far easier to preach a good Sermon, than to
 instruct the Ignorant in the Principles of Religion. And
 as much as this Work is despised by some, I doubt not
 but it will try the Parts and Spirits of us all. So Arch-
 bishop *Usher*; "Great Scholars may think it beneath
 "them to spend their Time in teaching the first Prin-
 "ciples

“ ciples of the Doctrine of Christ. But they should
 “ consider, that the laying the Foundation skilfully, as
 “ it is the Matter of greatest Importance in the whole
 “ Building, so it is the Master-piece of the wisest
 “ Builder: *According to the Grace of God, which is given*
 “ *unto me, as a wise Master-Builder, I have laid the*
 “ *Foundation*, saith the great Apostle. And let the
 “ wisest of us all try whenever we please, we shall find,
 “ that to lay this Ground-work rightly, to make an
 “ ignorant Man understand the Grounds of Religion,
 “ will put us to the Trial of all our Skill.”

Perhaps in doing this, it may be well,

1. After a few loving Words spoken to all in the House, to take each Person singly into another Room, where you may deal closely with them, about their Sin and Misery and Duty. Set these home, or you lose all your Labour. At least let none be present but those who are quite familiar with each other.

2. Hear what the Children have learned by Heart.

3. Choose some of the weightiest Points, and try by farther Questions how they understand them. As,
 “ Do you believe you have Sin in you? That you was
 “ born in Sin? What does Sin deserve? What Remedy
 “ has God provided for guilty, helpless Sinners?”

4. Often with the Question, suggest the Answer. As,
 “ What is Repentance?” Sorrow for Sin, or a Con-
 “ viction that we are guilty, helpless Sinners? “ What is
 “ Faith?” A divine Conviction of Things not seen.

5. Where you perceive they do not understand the Stress of your Question, you must lead them into it by other Questions. So I have asked some, “ How do
 “ you think your many and great Sins will be pardoned?” They answer, “ By repenting and mending
 “ my Life,” and never mention Christ. I ask farther,
 “ But do you think your Amendment will make Satis-
 “ faction for your past Sins?” They will answer, “ We
 “ hope so, or else we know not what will.” One
 would think now, these had no Knowledge of Christ at all. And indeed, some have not. But others have,
 and give such Answers only because they do not under-
 stand

stand the Scope of the Question. Ask them farther, "Can you be saved without the Death of Christ?" They immediately say, "No." And if you ask, "What has he done or suffered for you?" They will say, "He shed his Blood for us," and profess, "they trust in That for Salvation." But many cannot express even what they have some Conception of, nay, can scarce learn, when Expressions are put into their Mouths. With these you are to deal exceeding tenderly, lest they be discouraged.

6. If you perceive them troubled that they cannot answer, step in yourself, and take the Burden off them: Answering that Question yourself; and then do it thoroughly and plainly, and make a full Explication of the whole Business to them.

7. Thus, when you have tried their Knowledge, proceed to instruct them yourself, according to their several Capacities. If a Man understand the Fundamentals, fall on what you perceive he most needs, either explaining further some Doctrine of the Gospel, or some Duty, or shewing the Necessity of something he neglects, as may be most edifying to him. If it be one that is grossly ignorant, give him a short Recital of the Christian Religion in the plainest Words. And if you perceive he understands not, go over it again till he does, and if possible fix it in his Memory.

8. Next, inquire into his State, whether convinced, or unconvinced, converted or unconverted. Tell him, if need be, what Conversion is. And then renew and enforce the Inquiry.

9. If you perceive he is unconverted, your next Business is, to labour with all your Skill and Power, to bring his Heart to a Sense of his Condition. Set this home with a more earnest Voice than you spoke before; for if you get not to the Heart, you do nothing.

10. Conclude all with a strong Exhortation, which should contain two Parts; 1. The Duty of the Heart, in order to receive Christ; 2. The avoiding former Sins, and constantly using the outward Means. And here besure, if you can, to get their Promise, to forsake Sin, change

change their Company, and use Means. And do this solemnly; reminding them of the Presence of God, that hears their Promises, and will expect the Performance.

11. Before you leave them, engage the Head of each Family, to call all his Family every *Sunday*, before they go to Bed, and hear what they can rehearse, and so continue, till they have learned the INSTRUCTIONS perfectly. And afterwards take care, that they do not forget what they had learned.

12. Speak differently, according to the Difference of them you have to deal with, as they are dull and obstinate, or timorous and tender. Be as plain as possible to those of weak Capacities, and give them Scripture-Proof for all you say.

Q. 18. How shall we prevent improper Persons from insinuating themselves into the Society?

A. 1. Give Tickets to none till they are recommended by a Leader, with whom they have met three Months on Trial:

2. Give Notes to none but those who are recommended by one you know, or till they have met three or four Times in a Class:

3. Give them the Rules the first Time they meet.

Q. 19. How can we add a proper Solemnity to the Admission of new Members?

A. 1. In all large Towns, admit new Members into the Bands only at the Quarterly Love-Feast, following the Visitation: 2. Read the Names of the Men to be admitted the Week before: 3. Admit into the Society, only on the *Sunday* following the Quarterly Visitation: 4. Read the Names of those to be admitted, on the *Sunday Evening* before: 5. Then also let the Names of those be read, who are excluded from the Society.

Q. 20. Should we insist every where on the Band-Rules? Particularly, that relating to Ruffles?

A. By all Means. This is no Time to give any Encouragement to Superfluity of Apparel. Therefore
give

give no Band-Tickets to any in *England, Scotland, or Ireland*, till they have left them off.

In order to this, 1. Read in every Society the "Thoughts concerning Dress." 2. In visiting the Classes, be very mild, but very strict. 3. Allow no exempt Case, not even of a married Woman: Better one suffer than many.

To encourage meeting in Band. 1. In every large Society, have a Love-Feast quarterly for the Bands only: 2. Never fail to meet them apart from the Society, once a Week: 3. Exhort all Believers to embrace the Advantage: 4. Give a Band-Ticket to none till they have met a Quarter on Trial.

Q. 21. Have those in Band left off Snuff and Drums?

A. No. Many are still inflaved to one or the other. In order to redress this, 1. Let no Preacher touch either on any Account: 2. Strongly dissuade our People from them: 3. Answer their Pretences, particularly those of curing the Cholic, or helping Digestion.

Q. 22. Do we observe any Evil which has lately prevailed among our Societies?

A. Many of our Members have lately married with Unbelievers, even such as were wholly unawakened. And this has been attended with fatal Consequences. Few of these have gained the unbelieving Wife or Husband. Generally they have themselves either had an heavy Cross for Life, or intirely fallen back into the World.

Q. 23. What can be done to put a Stop to this?

A. 1. Let every Preacher take Occasion publicly to enforce the Apostle's Caution, *Be ye not unequally yoked with Unbelievers.*

2. Let it be openly declared in every Place, That he who acts contrary to this, will be expelled the Society:

3. When any such is expelled, let an Exhortation be subjoined, dissuading others from following that bad Example:

4. And

4. And let all be exhorted, to take no Step in so weighty a Matter, without first advising with the most serious of his Brethren.

Q. 24. Ought any Woman to marry without the Consent of her Parents?

A. In general, she ought not. Yet there may be an Exception. For if, 1. A Woman be under a Necessity of marrying: If, 2. Her Parents absolutely refuse to let her marry any Christian: then she may, nay ought to marry without their Consent. Yet even then a Methodist-Preacher ought not to marry her.

Q. 25. Do not Sabbath-breaking, Dram-drinking, Evil-speaking, Unprofitable Conversation, Lightness, Gaiety or Expensiveness of Apparel, and contracting Debts without sufficient Care to discharge them, still prevail in several Places? What Method can we take to remove these Evils?

A. 1. Let us preach expressly and strongly on each of these Heads: 2. Read the Sermon upon Evil-speaking, in every Society: 3. Let the Leaders closely examine, and exhort every Person to put away the accursed Thing: 4. Let the Preacher warn the Society in every Place, that none who is hereafter guilty can remain with us: 5. In order to give them clearer Views of the Evil of these Things, let every Preacher recommend to every Society, and that frequently and earnestly, the Reading the Books we have published, preferable to any other. And when any new Book is sent to any Place, let him speak of it in the public Congregation: 6. Extirpate smuggling, buying or selling uncustomed Goods, out of every Society: Particularly in *Cornwall*, and in all Sea-port Towns. Let no Person remain with us, who will not totally abstain from every Kind and Degree of it: And after admonishing him, silence every Local Preacher who speaks in Defence of it. Speak tenderly, but earnestly and frequently of it, in every Society near the Coasts: And read to them and disperse diligently among them "The Word to a Smuggler." 7. Extirpate Bribery, receiving

ceiving any Thing, directly or indirectly, for voting in any Election. Shew no Respect of Persons herein, but expel all who touch the accursed Thing. Let this be particularly observed at *Grimby* and *St Ives*: Largely shew in every Society the Wickedness of thus selling our Country. Do the same Thing in private Conversation. And read every where "The Word to a Freeholder," and disperse it with both Hands: and in public and private enlarge on Oeconomy, as a Branch of Religion.

Q. 26. What shall we do to prevent Scandal, when any of our Members become Bankrupt?

A. Let two of the principal Members of the Society be deputed to examine his Accounts. And if he has not kept fair Accounts, or has been concerned in that base Practice of raising Money by *coining* Notes (commonly called *the Bill-trade*) let him be immediately expelled the Society.

Q. 27. What is the Office of a Christian Minister?

A. To watch over Souls, as he that must give Account.

Q. 28. In what View may we and our Helpers be considered?

A. Perhaps as extraordinary Messengers, designed by God to provoke others to Jealousy.

Q. 29. What is the Office of an *Helper*?

A. In the Absence of a Minister, to feed and guide the Flock: In particular,

1. To expound every Morning and Evening: (But *N. B.* He is never, in any Place, to begin later in the Evening than Seven o'Clock, except in Harvest-time.)

2. To meet the United Society, the Bands, the Select Society, and the Penitents every Week: And,

3. To receive on Trial for the Society and Bands, and to put the Disorderly back on Trial:

4. To meet the Leaders of the Bands and Classes Weekly, and the Stewards, and to overlook their Accounts.

Let

Let every Preacher be particularly exact in the Morning Preaching, and meeting the Leaders.

Q. 30. What are the Rules of an Helper ?

1. Be diligent Never be unemployed a Moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away Time : Neither spend any more Time at any Place than is strictly necessary.

2. Be serious. Let your Motto be, HOLINESS TO THE LORD. Avoid all Lightness, Jestings and foolish Talking.

3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with Women : Particularly with young Women in private.

4. Take no Step toward Marriage, without first acquainting us with your Design.

5. Believe Evil of no one : Unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best Construction on every Thing. You know the Judge is always supposed to be on the Prisoner's Side.

6. Speak Evil of no one : Else your Word especially would eat as doth a Canker. Keep your Thoughts within your own Breast, till you come to the Person concerned.

7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly, and as soon as may be, else it will fester in your Heart. Make all haste to cast the Fire out of your Bosom.

8. Do not affect the Gentleman. You have no more to do with this Character, than with that of a Dancing-Master. A Preacher of the Gospel is the Servant of all.

9. Be ashamed of nothing but Sin : Not of fetching Wood (if Time permit) or of drawing Water ; not of cleaning your own Shoes, or your Neighbours.

10. Be punctual. Do every Thing exactly at the Time. And in general, do not mend our Rules, but keep them : not for Wrath, but for Conscience sake.

11. You have nothing to do but to save Souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this Work. And go always,

always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most.

12. Act in all Things, not according to your own Will, but as a Son in the Gospel. As such, it is your Part to employ your Time in the Manner which we direct: partly in Preaching and Visiting from House to House; partly in Reading, Meditation and Prayer: Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's Vineyard, it is needful that you should do *that Part* of the Work which we advise, at *those Times and Places*, which we judge most for his Glory.

Q. 31. What general Method of employing our Time would you advise us to?

A. We advise you, 1. As often as possible to rise at Four. 2. From Four to Five in the Morning, and from Five to Six in the Evening, to meditate, pray and read, partly the Scripture with the Notes, partly the closely practical Parts of what we have published. 3. From Six in the Morning to Twelve (allowing an Hour for Breakfast) to read in order, with much Prayer, Bishop Pearson on the Creed, Mr Boehm's and Nalson's Sermons; and the other Books which we have published in Prose or Verse.

Q. 32. Should our Helpers follow Trades?

A. This is an important Question: Therefore it will be proper to consider it thoroughly. The Question is not, whether they may occasionally Work with their Hands, as St Paul did: But whether it be proper for them to keep Shop and follow Merchandize. Of those who do so at present it may be observed, they are unquestionably upright Men. They are Men of considerable Gifts. We see the Fruit of their Labour, and they have a large Share in the Esteem and Love of the People. All this pleads on their Side, and cannot but give us a Prejudice in their Favour. Three of these urge Necessity for doing this: One that he may help his aged Father; another that he may maintain his Wife; a Third that he may keep his Children; a Fourth
does

does not plead any Necessity, but a Desire of doing more Good. One answered J. O. "If you cannot help your Father without trading, and if the Societies either cannot or will not, I will allow him what you allow him now. So this Necessity is at an End." To Ja. O. it was answered, "Your Wife wants nothing yet. It is not likely she ever will. You have Money beforehand. So your Necessity is not yet begun." To R. R. "You do not want now. When you do want any thing for your Children, you shall have it. So here is no Necessity."

As to the second Plea, doing more Good, it was inquired, Is it not doing Evil that Good may come? Is not the Thing in Question both Evil in itself (for us) and Evil in its Consequences? *First*, Is it not (with regard to Travelling Preachers) Evil in itself? Is it well consistent with that Scripture, *2 Tim. ii. 4. No Man that warreth, (takes on him the Profession of a Soldier, as we eminently do) entangleth himself with the Affairs of this Life*; plainly referring to the Roman Law, which absolutely forbid any Soldier to follow any other Profession. Is it well consistent with that Word, *Give Attendance to Reading, to Exhortation, to Teaching; Meditate on these Things, give thyself wholly to them?* *1 Tim. iv. 13, 15.* Can we be said to give ourselves wholly to these Things, if we follow another Profession? Does not our Church, in her Office of Ordination, require every Minister to do this? If they do not, the more Shame for them. But this plainly shews, what both they and we ought to do. We indeed more particularly; because God has called us to *provoke them to Jealousy*, to supply their Lack of Service to the Sheep that are as without Shepherds, and to spend and be spent therein. We above all; because every Travelling Preacher solemnly professes to have nothing else to do, and receives his little Allowance for this very End, that he may not need to do any Thing else, that he may not be entangled in the Things of this Life; but may give himself wholly to these Things?

Secondly,

Secondly, Is it not Evil in its Consequences? Have not some ill Consequences appeared already? And is there not the greatest Reason to apprehend that still worse would follow? We are concerned to give no Offence, either to Jew or Gentile, or to the Church of God. But this has already offended, not only many of the World, but many of our own Brethren. Many of the Preachers in particular have been much grieved: Yea and those most, who were most alive to God. Now "the Beginning of Offence, is as when one letteth out Water: Who can gather it up again?" They are grieved the more, because they apprehend this would be an increasing Evil. For where will it stop? If one Preacher follows Trade, so may Twenty; so may every one. And if any of them trade a little, why not ever so much? Who can fix how far he should go? Therefore we advise our Brethren who have been concerned herein, to give up all, and attend to the *one* Business. And we doubt not but God will recompense them an hundred Fold, even in this World, as well as in the World to come.

It is true, this cannot be done on a sudden. But it may between this and the next Conference. And even as to the Drops that many sold, if their Wives sell them at Home, well: But it is not proper for any Preacher to hawk them about. It has a bad Appearance. It does not well suit the Dignity of his Calling.

Two Years after, it was agreed by all our Brethren, that no Preacher who will not relinquish his Trade of buying and selling, or of making and vending Pills, Drops, Balsams, or Medicines of any Kind, shall be considered as a Travelling Preacher any longer: And that it shall be demanded of all those Preachers, who have traded in Cloth, Hardware, Pills, Drops, Balsams, or Medicines of any Kind, at the next Conference, whether they have intirely left it off, or not?

Q. 33. Why is it, that the People under our Care are no better?

A. Other

A. Other Reasons may concur; but the Chief is, because *we* are not more *knowing* and more *holy*.

Q. 34. But why are we not more *knowing*?

A. Because we are idle. We forget the very first Rule, "Be diligent. Never be unemployed a Moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away Time: Neither spend any more Time at any Place than is strictly necessary."

I fear there is altogether a Fault in this Matter; and that few of us are clear. Which of you spends as many Hours a Day, in God's *Work*, as you did formerly in *Man's Work*? We talk, talk—or read History, or what comes next to hand.

We must, absolutely must, cure this Evil, or give up the whole Work.

But how? 1. Read the *most useful* Books, and that regularly and constantly. Steadily spend all the Morning in this Employ, or at least five Hours in Twenty-four.

"But I read *only* the Bible." Then you ought to teach others to read *only* the Bible, and by Parity of Reason, to *bear only* the Bible. But if so, you need preach no more. Just so said *George Bell*. And what is the Fruit? Why now, he neither reads the Bible, nor any Thing else.

This is rank Enthusiasm. If you need no Book but the Bible, you are got above *St Paul*. He wanted others too. *Bring the Books*, says he, *but especially the Parchments*, those wrote on Parchment.

"But I have *no Taste* for Reading." Contract a Taste for it by Use, or return to your Trade.

"But different Men have different Tastes." Therefore some may read less than others; but none should read less than this.

"But I have no Books." I will give each of you, as fast as you will read them, Books to the Value of Five Pounds. And I desire the Assistants will take care, that all the large Societies provide *The Christian Library*, for the Use of the Preachers.

2. In

2. In the Afternoon follow Mr *Baxter's* Plan. Then you will have no Time to spare: None for learning Latin, or Greek, or Hebrew: You will have Work enough for all your Time. Then likewise no Preacher will stay with us who is as Salt that has lost its Savour. For to such, this Employment would be mere Drudgery. And in order to it, you will have need of all the Knowledge you can procure.

The Sum is. Go into *every House* in course, and teach *every one* therein, Young and Old, if they belong to us, to be Christians, inwardly and outwardly.

Make every Particular plain to their Understanding. Fix it in their Memory. Write it on their Heart. In order to this, there must be *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept*. I remember to have heard my Father asking my Mother, "How could you have the Patience, to tell that Blockhead the same Thing, Twenty times over?" She answered, "Why, if I had told him but Nineteen times, I should have lost all my Labour." What Patience indeed, what Love, what Knowledge is requisite for this?

Q. 34. In what Method should we instruct them?

A. Read, explain, inforce,

1. The Rules of the Society:
2. Instructions for Children:
3. The fourth Volume of Sermons:
4. *Philip Henry's* Method of Family Prayer.

Over and above: Where there are Ten Children in a Society, spend at least an Hour with them Twice a Week. And do this, not in a dull, dry, formal Manner, but in earnest, with your Might.

"But I have no Gift for this." Gift or no Gift, you are to do it, else you are not called to be a Methodist-Preacher. Do it as you can, till you can do it as you would. Pray earnestly for the Gift, and use the Means for it; particularly studying the Childrens Tracts.

Q. 35. Why are not *we* more Holy? Why do not *we* live in Eternity? Walk with God all the Day long?

Why

Why are we not all devoted to God? Breathing the whole Spirit of *Missionaries*?

A. Because we are Enthusiasts: Looking for the End, without using the Means.

In order to be thoroughly convinced of this, we need only consider the first Minutes, p. 12, 13, and each examine himself upon each Article.

To touch only upon two or three Instances.

Do you rise at Four? Or even at Five, when you do not preach?

Do you fast once a Week? Once a Month? Do you know the Obligation, or Benefit of it?

Do you recommend the Five o'Clock Hour for Private-Prayer? Do you observe it? Do not you find that *any time is no time*?

O let us all *stir up the Gift of God that is in us!* Let us no more *sleep, as do others:* But whatsoever our *hand findeth to do, let us do it with our might!*

Q. 36. Who is the *Affistant*?

A. That Preacher in each Circuit, who is appointed from Time to Time to take Charge of the Societies, and the other Preachers therein.

Q. 37. How should an *Affistant* be qualified for this Charge?

A. By walking closely with God, and having his Work greatly at Heart; by understanding and loving Discipline, ours in particular; and by loving the Church of *England*, and resolving not to separate from it.

Q. 38. What is the Business of an *Affistant*?

A. 1. To see that the other Preachers in his Circuit behave well, and want nothing: 2. To visit the Classes quarterly in each Place, regulate the Bands, and deliver new Tickets: 3. To keep Watch-nights and Love-feasts: 4. To take in, or put out of the Bands or Society. 5. To hold Quarterly Meetings; and therein diligently to inquire both into the Spiritual and Temporal State of each Society. 6. To take care that every Society be duly supplied with Books, and that the Money for them be constantly returned. 7. To

B

send

send from every Quarterly Meeting a circumstantial Account to *London* of every remarkable Conversion, and of every one who dies in the Triumph of Faith. 8. To take exact Lists of his Societies every *Easter*, and bring them to the next Conference. 9. To meet the married Men, the married Women, the single Men, and the single Women, in the large Societies once a Quarter. 10. To see that every Society have a private Room, and a Set of the Library for the Helper, and, 11. To travel with me, if required, once a Year, thro' the Societies in his Circuit.

Q. 39. Ought we to insist upon our Rule, that no Preacher print any Thing without your Approbation ?

A. Undoubtedly. And whoever does it for the Time to come, cannot take it ill, if he is excluded from our Connection. Let every one take this Warning, and afterwards blame none but himself.

Q. 40. But has the Office of an Assistant been thoroughly executed ?

A. No; not by one Assistant out of three. For Instance. Every Assistant ought, 1. To "see that the other Preachers behave well." But who has sent me Word, whether they did or no? 2. "To visit the Classes, regulate the Bands, and deliver Tickets quarterly." How few have done this? 3. Love-feasts for the Bands have been neglected. 4. Nor have Persons been regularly taken in, and put out of the Bands. 5. I fear, many of the Quarterly Meetings are formal, not spiritual. 6. The Societies are not half supplied with Books, not even with *Kempis*, *Instructions for Children*, and *Primitive Physic*, which ought to be in every House. And why should not each of you do like *William Pennington*? Carry Books with you through every Round: Exert yourselves in this. Be not ashamed. Be not weary. Leave no Stone unturned. 7. How few Accounts have I had, either of remarkable Deaths, or remarkable Conversions? 8. How few exact Lists have we received of the Societies? Take more Time, and more Pains in preparing them. 9. Who of you has met the married

ried and single Men and Women once a Quarter, even in the largest Societies? 10. You have not provided a private Room every where for the Preacher: Nor a Bed to himself: Neither the Library, for want of which, some still read Trash. Till this can be done, let there be immediately in every Place, at least the *Notes*, and the Tract on *Original Sin*.

Q. 41. Are there any other Advices which you would give the Assistants?

A. Several. 1. Take a regular Catalogue of your Societies, as they live, in House-row. 2. Leave your Successor a particular Account of the State of the Circuit. 3. See that every Band-leader have the Rules of them. 4. Vigorously but calmly inforce the Rules concerning Ruffles, Drams, Snuff, and Tobacco. When any Person is admitted into a Society, even good Breeding requires him to conform to the Rules of that Society. The same you should inforce in *Scotland* as *England*. The *Scots* will hear Reason as well as the *Englisb*. 5. As soon as there are four Men or Women Believers in any Place, put them into a Band. 6. Every where insist on Decency and Cleanliness. Tell them Cleanliness is next to Godliness. 7. Suffer no Love-feast to last above an Hour and half; let not one Duty interfere with another, and stop all Breaking the Cake with one another. That silly Custom was introduced by *James Wheatley*, and creates much Confusion. And, 9. Inform all the People from Time to Time, that none should remove from one Society to another, without a sufficient Reason; and that those who desire to remove are to acquaint you with their Reasons, and to have a Certificate in these Words (else they will not be received in other Societies.) “*A. B.* the Bearer, is a Member of our Society in *M*——, I believe he has a sufficient Cause for removing.” 10. In every Place, exhort those who were brought up in the Church to continue therein. And in visiting the Classes, ask every one, “Do you go to Church as often as ever you did?” Set the Example yourself: And immediately alter every Plan that interferes therewith: So that every

Preacher may attend the Church, at least two Sundays out of four.

Is there not a Cause? Are we not unawares by little and little sliding into a Separation from the Church? O remove every tendency thereto with all Diligence. 1. Let all our Preachers go to Church. 2. Let all the People go constantly; and, 3. Receive the Sacrament at every Opportunity. 4. Warn all against Niceness in hearing, a great and prevailing Evil. 5. Warn them also against despising the Prayers of the Church. 6. Against calling our Society *a Church* or *the Church*. 7. Against calling our Preachers *Ministers*, our Houses *Meeting-houses*, (call them plain *Preaching Houses*. 8. Do not licence them as such: The proper Form of a Petition to the Judge or Justice is, "A. B. desires to have his House in C—, licensed for public Worship." 9. Do not licence yourself till you are constrained, and then not as a *Dissenter*, but a *Methodist* Preacher. It is Time enough when you are prosecuted, to take the Oaths. And by so doing you are licensed.

Q. 42. But are we not *Dissenters*?

A. We are irregular, 1. By calling Sinners to Repentance, in *all Places* of God's Dominion. 2. By frequently using *extemporary Prayer*. Yet we are not *Dissenters* in the only sense which our Law acknowledges: Namely, Persons who believe it is sinful to attend the Service of the Church: For we do attend it at all Opportunities. We will not, dare not separate from the Church, for the Reasons given several Years ago. We are not *Seceders*, nor do we bear any Resemblance to them. We set out upon quite opposite Principles. The Seceders laid the very Foundation of their Work in judging and condemning *Others*. We laid the Foundation of our Work, in judging and condemning ourselves. They begin every where, with shewing their Hearers, how fallen *the Church* and *Ministers* are. We begin every where, with shewing our Hearers, how fallen they are *themselves*.

And

And as we are not Dissenters from the Church now, so we will do nothing, willingly, which tends to a Separation from it. Therefore let every Assistant immediately so order his Circuit, that no Preacher may be hindered from attending the Church, more than Two Sundays in the Month. Never make light of going to Church, either by Word or Deed. Remember Mr. Hook, a very eminent and zealous *Papist*. When I asked him, "Sir, What do you for Public Worship here, where you have no *Romish* Sermon?" He answered, "Sir, I am so fully convinced, it is the Duty of every Man to worship God in Public, that I go to Church every Sunday. If I cannot have such Worship as I would, I will have such Worship as I can."

But some may say, "Our own Service is Public Worship." Yes, *in a Sense*: But not such as supercedes the Church Service. We never designed it should: We have an hundred Times professed the contrary. It presupposes Public Prayer, like the Sermons at the University. Therefore I have over and over advised, "Use no *long Prayer*, either before or after Sermon." Therefore I myself frequently use only a Collect, and never enlarge in Prayer, unless at Intercession, or on a Watch-night, or on some extraordinary Occasion.

If it were designed to be instead of Church Service it would be essentially defective. For it seldom has the four Grand Parts of Public Prayer, Deprecation, Petition, Intercession and Thanksgiving. Neither is it, even on the Lord's Day, concluded with the Lord's Supper.

The Hour for it on that Day, unless where there is some peculiar Reason for a Variation, should be five in the Morning as well as in the Evening. Why should we make God's Day the shortest of the seven?

But if the People put ours in the room of the Church Service, we *hurt* them that stay with us, and *ruin* them that leave us. For then they will go no where

but lounge the Sabbath away, without any Public Worship at all.

I advise therefore all the *Methodists* in *England* and *Ireland*, who have been brought up in the Church, constantly to attend the Service of the Church, at least every Lord's Day.

Q. 43. Are all our Preachers merciful to their Beasts ?

A. Perhaps not. Every one ought not only to ride moderately, but also to see with his own Eyes his Horse rubbed, fed and bedded.

Q. 44. Do we sufficiently watch over our Helpers ?

A. We might consider those that are with us as our Pupils: Into whose Behaviour and Studies we should therefore make a particular Inquiry every Day.

Should we not frequently ask each, Do you walk closely, with God? Have you now Fellowship with the Father and the Son? At what Hour do you rise? Do you punctually observe the Morning and Evening Hour of Retirement? Do you spend the Day in the Manner which we advise? Do you read the Books we advise, and no other? Do you fast as often as your Health will permit? Do you converse seriously, usefully and closely? Do you pray before, and have you a determinate End in every Conversation?

To be more particular:

Do you use all the Means of Grate yourself, and inforce the Use of them on all Persons?

They are either *Instituted* or *Prudential*.

I. The Instituted are,

1st, Prayer; Private, Family, Public: consisting of Deprecation, Petition, Intercession, Thanksgiving.

Do you use each of these constantly (at set Times) and fervently?

Do you use Private Prayer every Morning and Evening? If you are your own Master, at Five in the Evening, and the Hour before or after Morning Preaching?

Do you forecast wherever you are, how to secure these Hours?

Do

Do you avow it every where ?

Are you resolute herein ?

Do you call your Family together at Five ?

Do you ask every where, 1. Have you Family Prayer ? 2. Do you retire at five o'Clock ?

II. Searching the Scripture, by,

1. Reading : *constantly*, some Part of every Day, and at all vacant Hours ; *regularly*, all the New Testament (at least) and the Lessons for Children in order ; *carefully*, with the Notes, *seriously*, *deliberately*, with much Prayer preceding, accompanying and following : *fruitfully*, immediately practising what you learn there ?

What other Books do you read ? Is it wise to read any, till you have read our Tracts, and the Christian Library ?

Do you give the Morning to Reading, Writing and Prayer ?

2. Meditating : At set Times ? How ? By Bishop Hall's, or Mr Baxter's Rule ? How long ?

3. Hearing : Constantly ? Every Morning ?

Humbly ? Uncritically, devoutly ?

Carefully ? With Prayer before, at, after ?

Fruitfully ? Immediately putting in Practice ?

Have you a New Testament always in your Pocket ? (See that the Notes are in every Society. Explain them to the Congregation.)

III. The LORD's Supper. Do you use this.

At every Opportunity ? With due Preparation ? That is, with solemn Prayer ? With careful Self-Examination ? With deep Repentance suited thereto ? With earnest and deliberate Self devotion ?

Do you in communicating *discern* the LORD's Body ?

Do you afterward *retire*, not formally, but in earnest ?

IV. Fasting : God led us to this at *Oxford*. And he led all of you to it, when you first set out.

How often do you fast now ? Every Friday ? In what degree ?

V. Christian Conference.

Are we convinced, how important, and how difficult it is to order our Conversation right?

Is it always *in Grace*? Seasoned with Salt? Meet to minister Grace to the Hearers?

Do we not converse too long at a Time? Is not an Hour at a Time commonly enough?

Would it not be well to plan our Conversation beforehand? To pray before and after it?

II. Prudential Means we may use either as *common Christians*, as *Methodists*, as *Preachers*, or as *Assistants*.

1. As common Christians. What particular Rules have you, for avoiding Evil? Doing Good? Growing in Grace? What Arts of holy Living?

2. As Methodists; Do you never miss any Meeting of the Society? Neither your Class, or Band?

3. As Preachers: Do you meet every Society Weekly? Also the Leaders? and Bands, if any?

Do you visit the Sick? and the Well? Instructing Masters and Parents? And in all Relative Duties?

4. As Assistants: Do you fill up and regulate the Bands wherever you come? Diligently inquire into the State of the Books, and do all you can to propagate them? Keep Watch-Nights once a Month? And Love-feasts? With one twice a Year, for all the Society?

Do you visit every Society once a Quarter, and regulate all Things therein?

Do you take a regular Catalogue of your Societies at least once a Year?

Do you write me an Account of all the Defects of the common Preachers, which you cannot yourself cure?

These Means may be used without Fruit. But there are some Means which cannot. Namely, Watching, Denying ourselves, Taking up our Cross, Exercise of the Presence of God.

1. Do we steadily watch against the World, the Devil, Ourselves? The besetting Sin?

2a Do

2. Do you deny yourselves every useless Pleasure of Sense? Imagination? Honour? Are you temperate in all Things? To take one Instance, in Food? Do you use only that *Kind* and that *Degree*, which is best both for the Body and Soul? Do you see the Necessity of this?

Do you eat no Flesh Suppers? No late Suppers? These naturally tend to destroy bodily Health.

Do you eat only Three Meals a Day? If Four, are you not an excellent Pattern to the Flock?

Do you take no more Food than is necessary at each Meal? You may know if you do, by a Load at your Stomach: by Drowsiness, or Heaviness: and in a while, by weak or bad Nerves.

Do you use only that *Kind*, and that *Degree* of Drink which is best both for your Body and Soul?

Do you drink Water? Why not? Did you ever? Why did you leave it off? If not for Health, when will you begin again? To Day?

How often do you drink Wine or Ale? Every Day? Do you *want* or *waste* it?

3. Wherein do you *take up your Cross* daily? Do you cheerfully *bear your Cross* (whatever is grievous to Nature) as a Gift of God, and labour to profit thereby?

4. Do you endeavour to set God always before you? To see his Eye continually fixt upon you? Never can you use these Means, but a Blessing will ensue. And the more you use them, the more will you "grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our " LORD JESUS CHRIST."

Q. 45. What can be done in order to a closer Union of our Helpers with each other?

A. 1. Let them be deeply convinced of the Want there is of it at present, and the absolute Necessity of it.

2. Let them pray for an earnest Desire of Union.

3. Let them speak freely to each other.

4. When they meet, let them never part without Prayer.

B. 5:

5. Let

4. Let them beware how they despise each other's Gifts.

5. Let them never speak slightly of each other in any Kind.

6. Let them defend one another's Characters in every Thing, to the utmost of their Power: and

7. Let them labour in Honour each to prefer the other before himself.

Q 46. How shall we avoid Popularity? We mean such Esteem or Love from the People, as is not for the Glory of God?

A. 1. Earnestly pray for a piercing Sense of the Danger there is, and the Sinfulness of it.

2. Take Care how you ingratiate yourself with any People, by Slackness of Discipline:

3. Or by any Method which another Preacher cannot follow.

4. Warn the People among whom you are most, of esteeming or loving you too much.

5. Converse sparingly with those who are particularly fond of you.

Q 47. How often should our Helpers preach?

A. Not more than twice a Day, unless on a Sunday, or some Extraordinary Occasion.

Q 48. Which is the best General Method of Preaching:

A. 1. To invite. 2. To convince. 3. To offer Christ. 4. To build up: And to do this in some measure in every Sermon.

Q 49. Are there any smaller Advices relating to Preaching, which might be of use to us?

A. Perhaps these, 1. Be sure to begin and end, precisely at the Time appointed.

2. Endeavour to be serious, weighty, and solemn in your whole Deportment before the Congregation.

3. Always suit your Subject to the Audience.

4. Choose the plainest Texts you can.

5. Take

5. Take care not to ramble from your Text, but keep close to it, and make out from it what you take in hand.

6. Beware of allegorizing or spiritualizing too much.

7. Take care of any thing awkward or affected, either in your Phrase, Gesture or Pronunciation.

8. Tell each other, if you observe any Thing of this kind.

9. Sing no Hymns of your own Composing.

10. Without a pressing Reason, do not pray above eight or ten Minutes (at most) without Intermission.

11. It would be well for every young Preacher, frequently to exhort, without taking any Text: And for every one, young or old, frequently to read and enlarge upon a Portion of the Notes.

Q. 50. What Sermons do we find by Experience to be attended with the greatest Blessing?

A. 1. Such as are most close, convincing, searching. 2. Such as have most of CHRIST. 3. Such as urge the Heinousness of Mens living in Contempt or Ignorance of him.

Q. 51. But have not some of us been led off from Practical Preaching, by (what was called) *preaching* CHRIST?

A. Indeed we have. The most effectual Way of preaching CHRIST, is to preach Him in all his Offices, and to declare his *Law*, as well as his *Gospel*, both to Believers and Unbelievers.

Q. 52. Do we now all preach strongly and closely, concerning both *inward* and *outward* Holiness?

A. It would be well, if we were more frequently and more largely to insist upon it in all its Branches.

Q. 53. Do we insist enough upon Practical Religion in general? And in particular, on Relative Duties? Using the Means of Grace? Private Prayer? Self-denial? Fasting? Seriousness?

A. It seems most of us have been wanting here. Let us take care to supply this Defect for the future.

Q. 54. How

Q. 54. How shall we be assured, that no Preacher will ever disappoint a Congregation?

A. Ask every one, 1. Do you see the great Sin, and fatal Consequences of it? 2. Will you break a Limb rather than wilfully break your Word herein? 3. If you do, can you blame us, for not employing you any more?

Q. 55. How shall we guard against Formality in public Worship? Particularly in Singing?

A. 1. By preaching frequently on that Head. 2. By taking care to speak only what we feel. By choosing such Hymns as are proper for the Congregation; generally Hymns of Prayer or Praise, rather than descriptive of particular States. 3. By not singing too much at once; seldom more than five or six Verses: 4. By suiting the Tune to the Nature of the Hymn: 5. By often stopping short and asking the People, "Now! Do you know what you said last? Did you speak no more than you felt? Did you sing it as unto the LORD; with the Spirit and with the Understanding also?"

Q. 56. What can be done to make the People sing true?

A. 1. Learn to sing true yourselves. 2. Recommend the Tunes every where. 3. If a Preacher cannot sing himself, let him choose two or three Persons in every Place to pitch the Tune for him.

Q. 57. What is it best to take just after Preaching?

A. Lemonade; Candied Orange Peel, or a little soft warm Ale. But Egg and Wine is downright Poison.

Q. 58. How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

A. Inquire, 1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the Love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all Manner of Conversation? 2. Have they *Gifts* (as well as *Grace*) for the Work? Have they (in some tolerable Degree) a clear, sound Understanding? Have they a right Judgment in the Things of God?

God? Have they a just Conception of Salvation by Faith? And has God given them any Degree of Utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they *Fruit*? Are any truly convinced of Sin and converted to God by their Preaching?

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

Q. 59. But how shall we know, whether they concur or not, in any particular Person?

A. 1. If he is near us, we will talk with him on the preceding Heads and hear him preach.

2. We will desire him to write down or relate the Reasons, why he thinks he is called of God thereto.

3. We will examine those who seem to be convinced of Sin, or converted to God by his Preaching.

4. If he is at a Distance, we will desire the Assistant to do this: and to inquire, what is the Judgment of his Brethren concerning him.

Q. 60. What Method may we use in receiving a new Helper?

A. A proper Time for doing this, is at a Conference after solemn Fasting and Prayer.

Every Person to be admitted is then to be present, and each of them may be asked,

“ A. B. Have you Faith in Christ? Are you going on to Perfection? Do you expect to be *perfected in love* in this Life? Are you groaning after it? Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and his Work? Do you know the *Methodist-Plan*? Have you read the *Plain Account*? The *Appeals*? Do you know the RULES of the Society? Of the Bands? Do you keep them? Do you take no Snuff? Tobacco? Drams? Do you constantly attend the Church and Sacrament? Have you read the Minutes? Are you willing to conform to them? Have you considered the twelve Rules of a Helper? Especially the first, tenth, and twelfth? Will you keep them for Conscience sake? Are you determined to employ *all* your Time in the Work of God? Will you preach every Morning and Evening? Endeavouring

vouring not to speak too long (an Hour in the whole) or too loud? Not lolling with your Elbows? Have you read the *Rules of Action and Utterance*? Will you meet the Society, the Bands, the Select Society and the Leaders in every Place? Will you diligently and earnestly instruct the Children, and visit from House to House? Will you recommend Fasting, both by Precept and Example?"

We may then receive him as a Probationer, by giving him the Minutes of the Conference inscribed thus,

To A. B.

"You think it your Duty to call Sinners to Repentance. Make full Proof hereof, and we shall rejoice to receive you as a Fellow-labourer.

"*Observe*, You are not to ramble up and down, but to go where the Assistant directs, and there only."

Let him then read and carefully weigh what is contained therein, and see whether he can agree to them, or no.

If he can, let him come to the next Conference; where, after Examination, Fasting and Prayer, he may be received into full Connection with us, by giving him the Minutes inscribed thus:

"So long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by these Rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a Fellow-labourer."

Mean time, let none exhort in any of our Societies without a Note of Permission from the Assistant. Let every Exhorter take care to have this renewed yearly. And let every Assistant rigorously insist upon it.

Q. 61. How can we provide for worn-out Preachers?

A. Those that can preach a little may be supernumerary Preachers where there is most need. As for those who cannot preach at all,

1. Let every travelling Preacher contribute *half a Guinea* yearly at the Conference.

2. Let every one when first received as a travelling Preacher, pay *one Guinea*.

3. Let

3. Let this be lodged in the Hands of the Stewards approved of by the Majority of the Preachers.

4. The present Stewards are JOSEPH COWNLY and JOHN MURLIN.

5. Out of this let Provision be made, first for the worn-out Preachers, then for the Widows and Children of those that are dead.

6. Every worn-out Preacher shall receive at least *ten Pounds* a Year.

7. Every Widow of a Preacher shall receive yearly during her Widowhood (if she wants it) a Sum not exceeding *ten Pounds*.

8. Every Child left by a Preacher shall receive once for all, a Sum not usually exceeding *ten Pounds*.

9. But none is intitled to any Thing from this Fund, till he has subscribed *two Guineas*.

10. Nor any Person from the Time he ceases (unless worn-out) to be a Travelling Preacher :

11. Nor any who neglects paying his Subscription for four Years together.

12. Let every Preacher, who does not bring or send his Subscription to the Conferences, be fined *two Shillings and Sixpence*.

13. This Fund is never to be reduced to less than an *Hundred Pounds*.

14. Let a Committee be chosen to see these Rules duly executed. The present Committee are,

Peter Jaco.

Duncan Wright.

Thomas Hanby.

Robert Roberts.

Alexander Matber.

Thomas Johnson.

John Powson.

James Oddie.

Thomas Oliver.

John Helton.

Christopher Hopper.

15. Let an exact Account of all Receipts and Disbursements be produced at the Conference.

Q. 62. How may the Wives of the Travelling Preachers be provided for ?

A. If a Preacher marries hand-over-head, he must provide for himself. As to the rest, we cannot but observe many Inconveniences have arisen, from the present

present Method of providing for the Wives of the Preachers. Those who are most proper for several Places, cannot be sent thither because they are married. And if they are sent, the People look upon them with an evil Eye, because they are burdened by their Families. In order to remedy these Inconveniences, let it be considered, 1. What each Circuit can contribute: 2. How many Wives are to be provided for: (Their Children are provided for where they are.) 3. By what Circuits? By this Means whether the Preachers in any particular Circuit are married or single, it makes no difference: So that any Preacher may be sent to any Circuit, without any Difficulty.

Q. 63. How many Circuits are there now?

A. Three and thirty in *England*, Ten in *Ireland*, Three in *Wales*, Two in *Scotland*, and Two in *America*.

Q. 64. Are our Preaching houses safe?

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

Q. 65. What then is to be done?

A. 1. Let the surviving Trustees choose others without delay. 2. Let those who have Debts on any of the Houses, give a Bond to settle them, as soon as their Debt is paid.

Q. 66. In what Form may an House be settled?

A. In the following:

“ This Indenture made
 “ between *B. Heap* of *Manchester*, in the County of
 “ on the one Part, and *Tbo. Philips*, Hatter,
 “ &c. on the other Part, WILNESHETH, That in Con-
 “ sideration of five Shillings, lawful Money of *Great*
 “ *Britain*, by the said *T. P.* &c. to the said *B. H.* truly
 “ paid, before the Sealing and Delivery hereof (the
 “ Receipt whereof the said *B. H.* doth hereby acknow-
 “ ledge) and for divers other Considerations him there-
 “ unto moving, the said *B. H.* hath granted, bar-
 “ gained, and sold; and by these Presents doth grant,
 “ bargain and sell unto the said *T. P.* &c. their Heirs
 “ and

“ and Assigns for ever, All that lately erected House
 “ or Tenement, with the Yard thereunto adjoining,
 “ situate near the upper End of *Market-street Lane* in
 “ *Manchester* aforesaid, now in the Tenure or Occu-
 “ pation of *T. Woolfinden*; together with all the Ways,
 “ Drains, Walls, and Privileges to the said Premises,
 “ or any Part thereof appertaining, as the same were
 “ purchased of *S. Hope*, of *Manchester* aforesaid, Brick-
 “ layer, before the said House or Tenement was built;
 “ and all the Profits thereof, and all the Right, Title
 “ and Interest, in Law and Equity. TO HAVE AND
 “ TO HOLD the said House or Tenement, Yard and
 “ other Premises, to the said *T. P. &c.* their Heirs,
 “ and Assigns for ever: NEVERTHELESS upon special
 “ Trust and Confidence, and to the Intent, that they
 “ and the Survivors of them, and the Trustees for the
 “ Time being, do and shall permit *J. Wesley*, late of
 “ *Lincoln Coll. Oxford*, Clerk, and such other Persons
 “ as he shall from Time to Time appoint, and at all
 “ Times, during his natural Life, and no other Persons,
 “ to have and enjoy the free Use and Benefit of the
 “ said Premises; that the said *J. Wesley*, and such
 “ other Persons as he appoints, may therein preach and
 “ expound God’s holy Word: and after his Decease,
 “ upon farther Trust and Confidence, and to the Intent
 “ that the said Trustees and the Survivors of them, and
 “ the Trustees for the Time being, do and shall per-
 “ mit *Charles Wesley*, late of *Christ Church Coll. Oxf.*
 “ Clerk, and such other Persons as he shall from
 “ Time to Time appoint, during his Life, and no
 “ others, to have and enjoy the said Premises for the
 “ Purposes aforesaid: and after his decease, upon far-
 “ ther Trust and Confidence, and to the Intent that
 “ the said *T. P. &c.* or the major Part of them, or
 “ the Survivors of them, and the major Part of the
 “ Trustees of the said Premises, for the Time being,
 “ shall from Time to Time, and at all Times for
 “ ever thereafter, permit such Persons as shall be ap-
 “ pointed at the Yearly Conference of the People
 “ called *Methodists*, in *London*, *Bristol* or *Leeds*, and
 “ no

" no others, to have and enjoy the said Premises, for
 " the Purposes aforesaid: *Provided always, that the*
 " *said Persons preach no other Doctrine than is contained*
 " *in Mr W's Notes upon the New Testament, and four*
 " *Volumes of Sermons: x Provided also, that they preach in*
 + " *the said House at least one Evening in every Week, and*
 " *at Five o'Clock on each Morning following.* And upon
 " farther Trust and Confidence, that as often as any
 " of these Trustees, or of the Trustees for the Time
 " being shall die, or cease to be a Member of the Society
 " commonly called *Methodists*, the rest of the said Truf-
 " tees, or of the Trustees for the Time being, as soon
 " as conveniently may be, shall and may choose ano-
 " ther Trustee, or Trustees, in order to keep up the
 " Number of *nine* Trustees for ever. In Witness whereof
 " the said *B. H.* hath hereunto set his Hand and Seal
 " the Day and Year first above written."

In this Form the first Proprietors of the House are to make it over to five, seven or nine Trustees.

Q. 67. But is this Form a safe one? Should we not have the Opinion of a Council upon it?

A. I think this would be throwing Money away.
 1. Because this Form was drawn up by three eminent Counsellors: but, 2. It is the Way of almost every Lawyer, to blame what another has done. Therefore you cannot at all infer, that they *think* a Thing wrong because they *say* so. 3. If they did in reality *think* it wrong, this would not *prove* that it was so. 4. If there was (which I do not believe) some Defect therein, who would go to law with the Body of *Methodists*? 5. And if they did, would any Court in *England* put them out of *Possession*? Especially when the *Intent* of the Deed was plain and undeniable.

Q. 68. Is any Thing farther advisable with regard to Building?

A. 1. Build all Preaching houses, if the Ground will admit, in the Octogon Form. It is best for the Voice, and on many Accounts more commodious than any other. 2. Let the Roof rise only one third of the Breadth:

Breadth: This is the true Proportion. 3. Have enow Windows and Doors; And let all the Windows be fashed, opening downward. 4. Let there be no tub-Pulpit; but a square Projection, with a long Seat behind. 5. Let there be no Backs to the Seats, which should have Isles on each side, and be parted in the middle by a Rail running all along, to divide the Men from the Women.

Q. 69. Is there any Exception to the Rule, "Let the Men and Women sit apart?"

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

Q. 70. What can be done, to make the *Methodists* sensible of the Excellency of *Kingwood* School?

A. I. Let every Assitant read the following Account of it yearly in every Society. II. Let every Preacher earnestly exhort all Parents, that are able to send their Children thither, and be at the Pains to answer all their Objections, and refute all the Lies they may have heard about it.

1. The Wisdom and Love of God have now thrust out a large Number of Labourers into his Harvest; Men who desire nothing on Earth but to promote the Glory of God, to save their own Souls, and them that hear them. And those to whom they minister spiritual Things, willingly minister to them of their carnal Things; so that they *have Food to eat and Raiment to put on*, and are content therewith.

2. A competent Provision is likewise made for the Wives of married Preachers. These also lack nothing; having a weekly Allowance, over and above for their little Children; so that neither they nor their Husbands need be *careful about many Things*, but may wait upon the Lord without Distraction.

3. Yet one considerable Difficulty lies on those who have Boys, when they grow too big to be under their Mother's Direction. Having no Father to govern and instruct them, they are exposed to a thousand

and Temptations. To remedy this, we have a School on purpose for them, wherein they have all the Instruction they are capable of, together with all Things needful for the Body, Clothes only excepted. And it may be, if God prosper this Labour of Love, they will have these too shortly.

4. In whatever View we look upon this, it is one of the noblest Charities that can be conceived. How reasonable is the Institution? Is it fit that the Children of those who leave Wife, Home, and all that is dear, to save Souls from Death, should want what is needful either for Soul or Body? Ought not we to supply what the Parent cannot, because of his Labours in the Gospel? How excellent are the Effects of this Institution? The Preacher eased of this Weight, can the more cheerfully go on in his Labour. And perhaps many of these Children may hereafter fill up the Place of those that shall *rest from their Labours*.

5. It is not strange therefore, considering the Excellence of this Design, that Satan should have taken much Pains to defeat it: particularly by Lies of every Kind, which were plentifully invented and handed about for several Years, even by some of our Preachers. But Truth now prevails, and its Adversaries are put to Silence. It is well known that the Children want nothing; that they scarce know what Sickness means; that they are well instructed in whatever they are capable of learning; that they are carefully and tenderly governed; and that the Behaviour of all in the House, elder and younger, is *as becometh the Gospel of Christ*.

6. But the Expence of such an Undertaking is very large: so that although we have at present but thirteen or fourteen poor Children, we are continually running behind, notwithstanding the yearly Subscription made at *London* and *Bristol*. The best Means we could think of at our late Conference to supply the Deficiency is, once a Year to desire the Assistance of all those in every Place who wish well to the

the Work of God ; all who long to see Sinners converted to God, and the Kingdom of CHRIST set up in all the Earth.

7. All of *you*, who are thus minded, have an Opportunity now of shewing your Love to the Gospel. Now promote, as far as in you lies, one of the noblest Charities in the World. Now forward, as you are able, one of the most excellent Designs that ever was set on foot in this Kingdom. Do what you can to comfort the Parents, who give up their all for you, and to give their Children cause to bless you. You will be no poorer for what you do on such an Occasion. God is a good Pay-master. And you know, in doing this, you *lend unto the LORD: In due Time HE shall pay you again.*

Q. 71. But how can we keep it out of Debt, which never was done yet ?

A. Let a Collection be made for it the *Sunday* before or after Midsummer, in every Preaching-house, great and small, throughout *England, Scotland, and Ireland.*

Q. 72. How may we raise a *General Fund* ?

A. By a Yearly Subscription to be proposed by every Assitant when he visits the Classes at *Christmas*, and received at the Visitation following.

To this End he may then read and enlarge upon the following Hints in every Society.

“ 1. Within these twelve or fifteen Years several of our Brethren in various Parts, having no Room which would contain the Congregation, by the Advice of the Preachers have built Houses for Preaching, capable of containing the usual Number of Hearers: But this has necessarily involved them in large Debts. Their Debt at *Halifax*, for Instance, amounted two or three Years ago to Two Hundred Pounds: That at *Leeds* to more than Three Hundred Pounds: That at *Manchester* to Three Hundred and fifty Pounds: That at *Liverpool* to Four Hundred Pounds. So that the whole Debt contracted by Building was, I apprehend

apprehend, little short of Four Thousand Pounds. This the Societies to whom those Houses belong, are by no Means able to pay: But the whole Body of Methodists joining together can do it without Inconvenience. Only let them chearfully exert on so pressing an Occasion the Ability which God hath given them.

2. But there is a greater Difficulty than this. Where there are Houses, there are not Preachers. Though the Harvest is plenteous, the Labourers are few. And what can we do for a Supply? We cannot purchase them for Money: We cannot hire, or make them. God alone can do this. And He has in some measure done it already. In several Parts of *England* there are local Preachers, who have both Gifts and Graces equal to those of most Itinerants. "Why then do they not travel?" They are willing so to do: But they are afraid of bringing a Scandal upon the Gospel: Because, they have contracted Debts, which, though very small, they are not yet able to pay. So they are bound Hand and Foot: But shall We suffer this? Shall we not set them at Liberty? We cannot *buy* a Preacher for Ten thousand Pounds: but we may *release* one for Ten or Twelve. Can any Money be better bestowed? Let us, in the Name of God, send these Labourers into his Harvest! Men who desire only to give their Bodies, Souls, Time, All, for Him that was given for us.

3. But still how shall we send them into those Parts, where they are most of all wanted? Suppose the North-West of *Ireland*, and the North of *Scotland*? Many are willing to hear; but not to bear the Expence. Nor can it as yet be expected of them: stay till the Word of God has touched their Hearts, and then they will gladly provide for them that preach it. Does it not lie upon us, in the mean Time, to supply their lack of Service? To raise a General Fund out of which from time to time that Expence may be defrayed? By this Means, those who willingly offer themselves may travel thro' every Part, whether there are Societies or not, and stay wherever there is a Call, without

without being burdensom to any. Thus may the Gospel, in the Life and Power thereof, be spread from-Sea to Sea. Which of you will not rejoice to throw in your Mite to promote this glorious Work ?

4. " It is true, when Want of Money to defray the Expence is removed, another Hindrance will often arise. Satan will stir up his trusty Servants, to fight lest his Kingdom be destroyed. But is there no Way to quell riotous Mobs, even when Magistrates will not do their Duty ? There is one and only one Way : Move the King's Bench for an Information against them. This is a Way which has never failed us yet. No, not in a single Instance. The only Objection is the Expence. A Suit in the King's Bench usually costs fifty or sixty Pounds. But if we all join Hand and Heart together, cannot we make this easy too ? Cannot we raise a Common Stock which shall suffice for this as well as for the preceding Purposes ? By the Blessing of God we can. And who would not gladly contribute toward it ?

5. Let then every Member of our Society in *England*, once a Year, set his Shoulder to the Work ; contributing more or less as God has prospered him, at the *Lady-Day* Visitation of the Classes. Let none be excluded from giving something, be it a Penny, a Half-penny, a Farthing. Remember the Widow's two Mites ! And let those who are able to give Shillings, Crowns, and Pounds, do it willingly. The Money contributed will be brought to *Leeds, Bristol, or London*, at the ensuing Conference. Two Thirds of it at least will be allotted for those public Debts which call the loudest. The rest will be partly employed in setting at Liberty such local Preachers as are tied down by small Debts ; partly reserved for propagating the Gospel, where there are none to bear the Expences of the Preacher.

6. Men and Brethren, Help ! Was there ever a Call like *this*, since you first heard the Gospel-Sound ? Help to relieve your Companions in the Kingdom of JESUS, who are prest above Measure. " Bear ye
one

one another's Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of CHRIST." Help to send forth able, willing Labourers into your LORD's Harvest: So shall ye be assistant in saving Souls from Death, and hiding a Multitude of Sins. Help to spread the Gospel of your Salvation into the remotest Corners of the Kingdom, till "the Knowledge of our LORD shall cover the Land, as the Waters cover the Sea." Help to deliver the Poor out of the Hand of the Oppressor, to procure them the Blessings which we enjoy: So shall it appear to ourselves, and all Men, that we are indeed one Body, united by one Spirit; so shall the baptized Heathens be yet again constrained to say, "See how these Christians love one another."

The Money received is to be brought by the Assistants to the next Conference.

Q. 73. But notwithstanding all that has been contributed and paid, we are still *Six thousand nine hundred and fifty eight Pounds* in Debt. So that we gain no ground. What can be done? How can we prevent the Increase of Debt?

A. By putting an absolute stop to all Building for the ensuing Year. Let no new House be built, no Addition or Alteration be made in any old one, unless the Proposers thereof can and will defray the whole Expence of it.

Q. 74. What can be done in order to pay the old Debt?

A. 1. Give a Note to each Assistant, specifying the Debts, toward which the Money collected in each Circuit next Year is to be paid.

2. Let each Assistant encourage the People in each Place, like those in *Birmingham*, to make a Push toward paying off their own Debt.

3. Let whatever is contributed in any Circuit, be paid away in that Circuit, as long as any Debt remains therein.

4. Let whatever is contributed in any single Place, which is in Debt, pay that as far as it will go.

5. Let

5. Let whatever is contributed in the Circuits which are out of debt, be produced at the Conference.

6. Let us try whether any Part of it may be paid off by Annuities.

Q. 75. What is the safest Way of leaving a Legacy for any charitable Purpose?

A. To leave it absolutely to a Person they can confide in.

Q. 76. What is the Method wherein we usually proceed in our Conferences?

A. We inquire,

1. What Preachers are *admitted*?

What *remain* on Trial?

Who are *admitted* on Trial? and

Who *desist* from Travelling?

2. Who act as *Assistants* this Year?

3. Are there any *Objections* to any of the Preachers? (who are named one by one.)

4. How are the Preachers stationed this Year?

5. What Numbers are in the Society?

6. What is the *Kingswood* Collection?

7. What is contributed toward the Debt?

8. How was this expended?

9. What is contributed toward the Preachers Fund?

10. What Demands are there upon it?

11. How many Preachers Wives are to be provided for?

12. By what Societies?

13. Where and when may our next Conference begin?

Q. 77. What *Power* is it which you exercise over both Preachers and People?

A. Count *Zinzendorff* loved to keep all Things *close*. I love to do all Things *openly*. I will therefore tell you all I know of the Matter, taking it from the very Beginning.

1. In *November* 1738, two or three Persons, who desired to *see from the Wrath to come*, and then seven or eight more came to me in *London*, and desired me to advise and pray with them. I said, "If you will meet " on *Thursday* Night I will help you as well as I can." More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many Hundreds. The Case was

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afterwards

afterwards the same at *Bristol, Kingswood, Newcastle,* and many other Parts of *England, Scotland and Ireland.* It may be observed the Desire was on *their* Part, not *mine.* My Desire was to live and die in Retirement. But I did not see that I could refuse them my Help, and be guiltless before God.

Here commenced my Power, namely, a Power to appoint *when,* and *where,* and *how* they should meet; and to remove those whose Lives shewed that they had no Desire to *flee from the Wrath to come.* And this Power remained the same, whether the People meeting together were Twelve, Twelve Hundred, or Twelve Thousand.

2. In a few Days some of them said, " Sir, we will not sit under you for nothing. We will subscribe quarterly." I said, " I will have nothing, for I want nothing. My Fellowship supplies me with all, and more than I want." One replied, " Nay, but you want *One hundred and fifteen Pounds* to pay for the Lease of the Foundery. And likewise a large Sum of Money will be wanting to put it into repair." On this Consideration I suffered them to subscribe. And when the Society met, I asked, " Who will take the Trouble of receiving this Money, and paying it where it is needful?" One said, " I will do it, and keep the Account for you." So here was the first Steward. Afterwards I desired one or two more to help me as Stewards, and in process of time a greater Number.

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

3. After a Time a young Man came, *T. Maxfield,* and said he desired to help me as a Son in the Gospel. Soon after came a second, *Thomas Richards,* and a third, *Thomas Westal.* These severally desired to serve me as Sons, and to labour when and where I should direct. Observe, These likewise desired *me,* not I *them.* But I durst not refuse their Assistance. And here commenced my Power, to appoint each of these *when, where* and *how*

how to labour: that is, while he chose to continue with me: For each had a Power to go away when he pleased: As I had also to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient Cause. The Case continued the same when the Number of Preachers increased. I had just the same Power still, to appoint *when*, and *where* and *how* each should help me, and to tell any, if I saw cause, " I do not desire your Help any longer." On these Terms, and no other, we joined at first: On these we continue joined. But they do me no favour in being directed by me. It is true, " My Reward is with the LORD." But at present I have nothing from it but Trouble and Care, and often a Burden I scarce know how to bear.

4. In 1744 I wrote to several Clergymen, and to all who then served me as Sons in the Gospel, desiring them to meet me in *London*, to give me their Advice concerning the best Method of carrying on the Work of God. *They* did not desire this Meeting, but *I* did, knowing that *in a Multitude of Counsellors there is safety*. And when their Number increased, so that it was neither needful nor convenient to invite them all, for several Years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and these only met at the Place appointed; till at length I gave a general Permission that all who desired it might come.

Observe, I myself sent for these of my own free Choice; and I sent for them to *advise*, not *govern* me. Neither did I at any of those Times divest myself of any Part of that *Power* above described, which the Providence of God had cast upon me, without any Design or Choice of mine.

What is that Power? It is a Power of *admitting into* and *excluding from* the Societies under my Care. Of choosing and removing *Stewards*, of receiving or not receiving *Helpers*; of appointing them *when*, *where* and *how* to help me; and of desiring any of them to meet me when I see good. And as it was merely in Obedience to the Providence of God, and for the Good of the People, that I at first accepted this Power, which I never sought, nay an hundred Times laboured to throw off; so it is on the same Considerations, not for Profit, Honour or Pleasure, that I use it at this Day.

5. But several Gentlemen are much offended at my having *so much Power*. My Answer to them is this.

I did not seek any Part of this Power: It came upon me unawares. But when it was come, not daring to bury that Talent, I used it to the best of my Judgment.

Yet I never was fond of it. I always did, and do now bear it as my Burden; the Burden which God lays upon me, and therefore I dare not yet lay it down.

But if you can tell me any one, or any five Men, to whom I may transfer this Burden, who *can* and *will* do just what I do now, I will heartily thank both Them and You.

6. But some of our *Helpers* say, "This is *Shackling freeborn Englishmen*;" and demand a *free Conference*; that is, A Meeting of all the Preachers, wherein all Things shall be determined by most Votes.

I answer; It is possible after my Death something of this Kind may take Place. But not while I live. To me the Preachers have engaged themselves to submit, to "serve me as *Sons in the Gospel*." But they are not thus engaged to any Man, or Number of Men besides. To me the People in general will submit. But they will not yet submit to any other.

It is Nonsense then to call my using *this Power*, "Shackling freeborn Englishmen." - None needs to submit to it unless he *will*; so there is no Shackling in the Case. Every Preacher, and every Member, may leave me when he pleases. But while he chooses to stay, it is on the same Terms that he joined me at first.

"But this is *arbitrary Power*; this is no less than *making yourself a Pope*."

If by *arbitrary Power* you mean a Power which I exercise *single*, without any Collegues therein, this is certainly true: But I see no hurt in it. *Arbitrary* in this Sense is a very harmless Word. If you mean, *Unjust, unreasonable, or tyrannical*, then it is not true.

As to the other Branch of the Charge, it carries no Face of Truth. The Pope affirms that every Christian must do all he bids, and believe all he says, under pain of Damnation. I never affirmed any thing that bears any, the most distant Resemblance to this. All I af-

firm

firm is, " The Preachers who choose to labour with me, choose to serve me as Sons in the Gospel." And " the People who choose to be under my Care, choose to be so on the same Terms they were at first."

Therefore all talk of this Kind is highly injurious to me, who bear this Burden merely for *your* Sakes. And it is exceeding mischievous to the People, tending to confound their Understandings, and to fill their Hearts with evil Surmisings and unkind Tempers towards me. To whom they really owe more, for taking all this Load upon me, for exercising this very *Power*, for shackling myself in this Manner, than for all my Preaching put together. Because preaching twice or thrice a Day is no Burden to me at all: But the Care of all the Preachers and all the People, is a Burden indeed!

Q. 78. What can be done in order to the future Union of the *Methodists*?

A. On Friday, August 4, 1769, Mr Wesley read in the Conference the following Paper.

1. IT has long been my Desire, that all those Ministers of our Church, who believe and preach Salvation by Faith, might cordially agree between themselves, and not hinder, but help one another. After occasionally pressing this in private Conversation, wherever I had Opportunity, I wrote down my Thoughts upon this Head, and sent them to each in a Letter. Out of Fifty or Sixty to whom I wrote, only Three vouchsafed me an Answer. So I give this up. I can do no more. They are a Rope of Sand; and such they will continue:

2. But it is otherwise with the *Travelling Preachers* in our Connection: You are at present One Body. You act in Concert with each other, and by united Councils. And now is the Time to consider what can be done, in order to continue this Union? Indeed; as long as I live, there will be no great Difficulty: I am, under God, a Centre of Union to all our *travelling*, as well as *local* Preachers.

They all know me and my Communication. They all love me for my Work's Sake: and therefore, were

it only out of Regard to me, they will continue connected with each other. But by what Means may this Connection be preserved, when God removes me from you?

3. I take it for granted, it cannot be preserved, by any Means, between those who have not a single Eye. Those who aim at any Thing but the Glory of God, and the Salvation of Men; who desire, or seek any earthly Thing, whether Honour, Profit, or Ease, will not, cannot continue in the Connection; it will not answer their Design. Some of them, perhaps a fourth of the whole Number, will procure Preferment in the Church. Others will turn Independents, and get separate Congregations, like *John Edwards* and *Charles Skelton*. Lay your Accounts with this, and be not surprised if some you do not suspect be of this Number.

4. But what Method can be taken to preserve a firm Union between those who choose to remain together?

Perhaps you might take some such Steps as these:

On Notice of my Death, let all the Preachers in *England* and *Ireland* repair to *London* within *Six Weeks*.

Let them seek God by solemn Fasting and Prayer.

Let them draw up Articles of Agreement, to be signed by those who choose to act in Concert.

Let those be dismissed who do not choose it, in the most friendly manner possible.

Let them choose, by Votes, a *Committee* of *Three*, *Five*, or *Seven*, each of whom is to be *Moderator* in his Turn.

Let the Committee do what I do now: Propose *Preachers* to be *tried*, *admitted*, or *excluded*: Fix the Place of each Preacher for the ensuing Year, and the Time of the next Conference.

5. Can any Thing be done now, in Order to lay a Foundation for this future Union? Would it not be well, for any that are willing, to sign some Articles of Agreement before God calls me hence? Suppose something like these:

“ We, whose Names are underwritten, being thoroughly convinced of the Necessity of a close Union
“ between those whom God is pleased to use as Instru-
“ ments

" ments in this glorious Work. in order to preserve this
" Union between ourselves, are resolved, GOD being
" our Helper,

" I. *To devote ourselves entirely to GOD; denying our-*
" *selves, taking up our Cross daily, steadily aiming at*
" *one Thing, to save our own Souls, and them that hear*
" *us.*

" II. *To preach the old Methodist Doctrines, and no*
" *other, contained in the Minutes of the Conferences.*

" III. *To observe and enforce the whole Methodist*
" *Discipline, laid down in the said Minutes."*

Q. 79. What can be done in order to revive the
Work of GOD where it is decayed?

A: 1. See that no Circuit be at any Time without
Preachers. Therefore let no Preacher who does not at-
tend the Conference, leave the Circuit at that Time on
any Pretence whatever. This is the most improper
Time in the whole Year. Let every Assistant see to
this, and require each of these to remain in the Circuit
till the new Preachers come.

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

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

2. Be more diligent in Field-preaching. The want
of preaching abroad, and of preaching in new Places,
has greatly damped the Work of GOD.

3. Wherever we have a large Preaching-house at
one End of a great Town, let us preach Abroad at the
other End of it, every *Sunday* Morning at least.

4. Be more diligent in Morning-preaching, where-
ever you can have twenty Hearers.

5. Be more active in dispersing the Books: particu-
larly the Sermon on the *Good Steward*, on *In-being Sin*,
the *Repentance of Believers*, and the *Scripture Way of*

7. Exhort the Leaders of Bands to speak to those with them in the closest manner possible.

8. Encourage all at the public Meeting of the Bands to speak with all openness and simplicity.

9. Let a Fast be observed in all our Societies on the last *Friday* in *September*, and on the *Friday* after *New Year's Day*, after *Lady-day*, and after *Midsummer-day*.

10. Wherever you can, use Intercession on *Friday*, and recommend *Fasting* both by Precept and Example.

11. Be conscientiously exact in the whole *Methodist Discipline*. And that you may understand it, read over carefully *The Plain Account of the People called Methodists*, and the several *Minutes of the CONFERENCES*.

12. Beware of *Formality* in Singing, or it will creep in upon us unawares. Is it not creeping in already, by those complex Tunes which it is scarce possible to sing with Devotion? Such is "Praise ye the LORD ye blessed ones:" Such the long quavering *Hallelujah* annexed to the Morning Song-Tune, which I defy any Man living to sing devoutly. The repeating the same Word so often, (but especially while another repeats different Words, the horrid Abuse which runs through the modern Church Music) as it shocks all common Sense, so it necessarily brings in dead Formality, and has no more of Religion in it than a *Lancashire Horn-pipe*. Beside, that it is a flat Contradiction to our LORD'S Command, "Use not vain Repetitions." For what is vain Repetition, if this is not? What End of Devotion does it serve? Again, Do not suffer the People to sing too slow. This naturally tends to Formality, and is brought in by those who have very strong, or very weak Voices. Is it not possible, that all the *Methodists* in the Nation should sing equally quick? Why should not the Assistant see that they be taught to sing in every large Society? And do this in such a Manner, as to obviate the ill Effects which might otherwise spring therefrom?

13. Which of us "fasts every *Friday* in the Year?" Which of us fasts at all? Does not this shew the present Temper of our Minds, (though not of all) soft and unnerved?

unnerved? How then can we advance the Work of God, though we may preach *loud* and *long* enough? Here is the Root of the Evil. Hence the Work of God droops; few are convinced, few justified, few of our Brethren sanctified! Hence more and more doubt if we are to be sanctified at all till Death: I mean sanctified throughout, saved from all Sin, perfected in Love. That we *may all speak the same Thing*, I ask once for all, Shall we defend this Perfection or give it up? You all agree to defend it; meaning thereby, as we did from the Beginning, Salvation from all Sin, by the Love of God and our Neighbour filling the Heart. The *Papists* say, "This cannot be attained till we have been a sufficient Time in Purgatory." The *Dissenters* say, "Nay, it will be attained as soon as the Soul and Body part." The *Old Methodists* said, "It may be attained *before* we die: A Moment after is too late." Is it so or no? You are all agreed, we may be saved from all Sin *before* Death. The Substance then is settled. But as to the Circumstance, Is the Change instantaneous or gradual? It is both one and the other. From the Moment we are justified, there may be a *gradual Sanctification* or a growing in Grace, a *daily Advance* in the Knowledge and Love of God. And if Sin cease before Death, there must in the Nature of the Thing be an instantaneous Change. There must be a last Moment wherein it does exist, and a first Moment wherein it does not. But should we in preaching insist on both one and the other? Certainly we must insist on the *gradual Change*; and that earnestly and continually. And are there not Reasons why we should insist on the *Instantaneous* also? If there be such a blessed Change before Death, should we not encourage all Believers to expect it? And the rather, because constant Experience shews, the more earnestly they expect this, the more swiftly and steadily does the gradual Work of God go on in their Souls. The more watchful they are against all Sin, the more careful to grow in Grace, the

ever this Expectation ceases. They are *saved by Hope* by this Hope of a total Change saved with a gradually increasing Salvation. Destroy this Hope, and that Salvation stands still; or rather decreases daily. Therefore whoever would advance the *gradual* Change in Believers should strongly insist upon the *Instantaneous*.

14. But how far from intire Sanctification are we still? The Religion of the *Methodists* in general, is not internal, at least, not deep, universal, uniform; but superficial, partial, uneven. And what Pains do we take to make it otherwise? Do we visit from House to House, according to the Plan laid down in the Minutes? Have you done this? Mr *Colley* begun. But he is gone to Paradise. And who has trod in his Steps? What hinders? Want of Time? Only (as *William Pennington* said) spend Half the Time in *this visiting*, which you spend in talking uselessly, and you will have Time enough. Do this, particularly in confirming and building up Believers. Then and not till then, the Work of the LORD will prosper in your Hands.

15. But what can we do for the *rising Generation*? Unless we can take care of these, the present Revival of Religion will be *Res unius ætatis*: It will last only the Age of a Man, Who will labour herein? Let him that is zealous for God and the Souls of Men begin *now*.

- “ 1. Spend an Hour a Week with the Children in every large Town; whether you like it or no.
- “ 2. Talk with them every Time you see any at home.
- “ 3. Pray in earnest for them.
- “ 4. Diligently instruct and vehemently exhort all Parents, at their own Houses.
- “ 5. Preach expressly on Education, particularly at *Midsummer*, when you speak of *King'swood*.”

16. Let every Preacher read carefully over the Life of Mr *Brainerd*. Let us be *Followers of him, as he was of CHRIST*, in absolute Self-devotion, in total Deadness to the World, and in fervent Love to God and Man. We want nothing but this. Then the World and the Devil must fall under our Feet.

17. 1. Let us keep to the Church. Over and above all the Reasons that were formerly given for this, we add

add another now from long Experience, They that leave the Church leave the Methodists. The Clergy cannot separate us from our Brethren, the Dissenting Ministers can and do. Therefore carefully avoid whatever has a Tendency to separate Men from the Church, In particular, preaching at any Hour which hinders them from going to it. Let every *Assistant* look to this.

2. Let all the Servants in our Preaching-Houses go to Church on *Sunday Morning* at least.

3. Let every Preacher go always on *Sunday Morning*, and when he can in the Afternoon. God will bless those who go on *Week Days* too, as often as they have Opportunity.

18. Take heed to your Doctrine.

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

1. With regard to *Man's Faithfulness*. Our LORD himself taught us to use the Expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his Authority, that if a Man is not *faithful in the unrighteous Mammon*, God will not give him the true Riches.

2. With regard to *working for Life*. This also our LORD has expressly commanded us. *Labour—εργάζεσθε*, literally, *work for the Meat that endureth to everlasting Life*. And in fact every Believer, till he comes to *Glory*, works for as well as from Life.

3. We have received it as a Maxim, That "a Man is to do nothing, in order to Justification:" Nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find Favour with God, should *cease from Evil, and learn to do well*. Whoever repents, should do *Works meet for Repentance*. And if this is not in order to find Favour, what does he do them for?

Review the whole *Affair*.

1. Who of us is now accepted of God?

He that now believes in CHRIST, with a loving obedient Heart.

Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this "Salvation by Works?"

Not by the *Merit* of Works, but *by* Works, as a *Condition*.

5. What have we then been disputing about for these Thirty Years?

I am afraid, *about Words*.

6. As to *Merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid: We are rewarded, *according to our Works, yea because of our Works*. How does this differ from *for the sake of our Works*? And how differs this from *Secundum merita operum*? As our Works *deserve*? Can you split this Hair? I doubt, I cannot.

7. The grand Objection to one of the preceding Propositions, is drawn from Matter of Fact. God does in Fact justify those, who by their own Confession, neither feared God nor wrought Righteousness. Is this an Exception to the General Rule?

It is a doubt, whether God makes any Exception at all. But how are we sure, that the Person in Question never did fear God and work Righteousness? His own saying so is not Proof: For we know, how all that are convinced of Sin, undervalue themselves in every Respect.

8. Does not talking of a *justified* or a *sanctified State*, tend to mislead Men? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one Moment? Whereas we are every Hour and every Moment pleasing or displeasing to God, *according to our Works*? According to the whole of our inward Tempers, and our outward Behaviour.

19. Lastly, We must needs visit from House to House, were it only to avoid Idleness. I am afraid, we are idle still. Do we not loiter away many Hours in every Week? Try yourselves. Keep a Diary of your Employment but for a Week, and then read it over. No Idleness can consist with Growth in Grace. Nay, without Exactness in *redeeming Time*, it is impossible to retain even the Life you received in Justification.

F I N I S.