

vated morals which a clergyman should impress upon his flock; but when, in 1839, he published his contributions to the *Edinburgh Review* in a collected form, he refers to the "Letters" in the preface in these words: "I have printed in this collection the "Letters" of Peter Plymley. The Government of that day took great pains to find out the author: all that they could find was, that they were brought to Mr. Budd, the publisher, by the Earl of Lauderdale. Somehow or other it came to be conjectured that I was the author. I always denied it; but finding that I deny it in vain, I have thought it might be as well to include the 'Letters' in this collection." This same gentleman, who afterwards became a dignitary of the church, and who scarcely hid his displeasure that he had not been lifted to the bishop's bench, had written several articles in the *Edinburgh* on Methodism and Missions. Methodism was a general name under which he classed not only the Methodists proper, but the various bodies of Nonconformists, and the Evangelical clergymen of the Church of England: "Not troubling ourselves," as he said, "to point out the finer shades and nicer discriminations of lunacy, but treating them all as in one general conspiracy against common sense and rational orthodox religion." By comparison of these articles we may know the writer's mind as to the composition of this "patent" Christianity, and we may be helped also to identify the type of men who were the subjects of his unworthy sneer. The revival of religion which began under the ministry of Wesleys and Whitfield, had left upon the face of society a broadly-marked character of its own. Right well did the sturdy spirits of that time do battle for the living truth. From beneath incumbent traditions, or from out of the depths of an indifference like that of death, they brought it to the day. Justification by faith—Luther's "*articulum stantis vel cadentis ecclesie*:"—was pressed upon the people not only as a truth to be believed, but as a blessing to be realized; and they preached it with the confidence of the early apostles, feeling that it was as fit for England as for Ephesus, and that it would overturn the heresies of modern times as readily as it

confounded the Stoics at Athens, or subdued the household of the Cæsars in Rome. Their singleness of aim and purpose, while it lifted them above fear, and preserved them in a high disinterestedness, "of which the world was not worthy," unfitted them, to some extent, for the perception of peculiar difficulties, and of the niceties of individual thought and need. They knew but a common want, to which they applied a common remedy. Their children clung to their creed and trod in their footsteps, but their expression of godliness was less rebuking and stern. It was rather the Samaritan's goodness than the prophet's warning. They were more "in" the world, though as little "of" it. They had a keener insight into the troubles of the doubtful, and a more practical knowledge of the manners and customs of society. They felt that earth had its claims which it were at once foolish and sinful to disregard; and while they held their faith fast—the faster, perhaps, under the dread shadow of the French Revolution—they formed confederacies, that it might work by love, and it was soon found warring against oppression and wrong, looking out for the needy that they might be enriched, and for the helpless that they might be befriended, sowing Bibles broadcast throughout the land, sending missionaries who might instruct and rescue the heathen, and stretching its magnificent charity to the very ends of the world.

These were the men against whom the *Edinburgh* reviewer took up his parable. Their wisdom was pronounced to be folly, their zeal fanaticism, their belief in the efficacy of prayer impiety, their efforts of missionary enterprise socially foolish and politically dangerous, and themselves, as the taste of this reviewer inclined, "canting hypocrites," "quacks in piety," "detachments of maniacs," or "nasty and numerous vermin." Who that remembers these amenities of controversy will not rejoice a kindlier day has dawned upon us now? Public opinion has become almost extreme in its recoil from this intolerance, and there is no reviewer in the land, unless he have lost all self-respect and care for his own reputation, who would venture to write such articles to-day. One great objection which was taken against them was