

six different bodies of Baptists, nine different forms of Methodism, three or four bodies of Presbyterians. No doubt a considerable extent of schism and dissension prevails among these different sects, but some of them are offsets of the same branches, and others have only single congregations. Then again, there are no less than seven different denominations of foreign Christians, such as foreign Protestants, members of the Greek Church, &c. Now, there have been proposed at various times and there have been adopted, or at least attempted, various plans for unity. Two especially have been tried. The first of these is the principle of coercion, and the second, of comprehension. Of coercion there is very little to be said. I believe we are all now agreed that coercion and persecution are synonymous terms, and that such a principle ought never to be applied, and can never succeed. I believe we are all agreed also in deploring that it ever should have been attempted, though perhaps there may be some excuse for those who in the outset may have thought before the experiment was made, that it was the duty of those who professed Christian principles, and of Christian Governments, to try and make their subjects do what they themselves believed to be right. The discovery, however, has been made by experience that the principle was wrong, and in that respect we are all agreed. But there is another thing in which I think we ought also to be agreed, which is not so well understood, and that is with regard to comprehension. The chief schemes of comprehension also partake of the same principle as schemes of coercion, and for this reason—you give up the attempt to coerce those who are separate from you, and then, in the hope of conciliating them, you try to coerce your brethren and your friends. That is comprehension; at least these are the only principles upon which comprehension ever yet has been attempted. Endeavours have been made to coerce those within the Church into an admission of principles which they repudiate, in the hope that thereby we may be able to conciliate those who are without the Church. If there is an evil principle in the one case, how is it that the same principle is not equally wrong when applied in the other? If you have no right to coerce those beyond the pale of your communion, what right have you to coerce those within the pale? Upon that principle I am bound to assert that no scheme of comprehension, carried in the face of any considerable body of members of the Church, ever can or ought to succeed in the objects that its promoters have in view. Let us see, then, if there be any other possible way by which reconciliation might, if it should please God, be brought about. In the first place, allow me to remind you of one circumstance which, if ever any such matter should again, in the good providence of God, stir and move men's minds towards a desire to return to us—let me remind you of the circumstances which in that case could not fail, I think, to exercise a strong influence on the matter—I refer to the opinions of Wesley, and the influence those opinions could not fail to have upon his followers. These are Wesley's words—“The chief design of His providence in sending us out, is undoubtedly to quicken our brethren, and the first message of all our preachers is to the lost sheep of the Church of England. Now, would it not be a flat contradiction to their design to separate from the Church?” But further, even a short time before his death, to show that he had not changed his sentiments, in the month of Dec., 1789, he wrote as follows, and signed it with his own name:—

“I never had any design of separating from the Church. I have no such design now. I do not believe the Methodists in general design it when I am no more seen. I do, and will do, all that is in my power to prevent such an event. I declare once more that I live and die a member of the Church of England: and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it—JOHN WESLEY.”

The *Rev. R. Seymour*—How long was that before his death?