

Reformation to a dogmatic controversy, but to a Gospel movement against the irreligion, worldliness and licentiousness of the eighteenth century. Far from founding itself, like its predecessors, on dogmatic or ecclesiastical division, only with the greatest reluctance was it brought to assume the form of a secession. Its tests, a portion of the Articles of the Church from which it sprang and the general spirit of its founder's discourses, sit pretty lightly upon it; and, if we may trust our own observation, in a Methodist Church a dogmatic or doctrinal sermon is seldom heard. Methodism however appears, like the other Churches to have its thorn in a growing jealousy of the powers of the ministry which was somewhat brusquely expressed by a lay reformer, when at the Conference he declared that Methodism was more burdened by priestcraft than any other denomination. It is the nature of every clergy and of every order of men in authority to extend its power, and they all require watching in this respect for their own good as well as for that of the Church or community. But this reformer of Methodism, if he wishes to reform, not to destroy, must be wary in his innovations, for his hand, he may depend upon it, is laid on the very life of the organization. Wesley may claim a place among the foremost of ecclesiastical statesmen. If his statesmanship moved on the lines of circumstance, that is what all true statesmanship does. If we wish to measure his sagacity we have only to compare the fortunes of his work with those of the other new Churches founded about that time or since, from Moravianism down to the latest of the progeny, the 'Church of Robert Elsmere.' Some of his ordinances were of the time and embodied an enthusiasm which has since cooled down. But the combination of a strong ministry, as the uniting, animating, regulating and propelling force with a spiritual democracy of laymen called, each of them, to play an active part in Church work, was for all time, or at least for as many years as Methodism may be destined to endure. It is the grand secret of Wesley's statesmanship, and reformers who are dealing with it are dealing, we repeat, with