

body of our readers who had not the opportunity and high privilege to hear this invaluable discourse, to state a few particulars respecting it. The sermon occupied, in its delivery, two hours and fifty-three minutes. The energy of the Preacher was sustained throughout the whole of it;—his strength of voice was unimpaired;—and, from first to last, he appeared, in a remarkable manner, to be “endued with power from on high,” and “the unction of the Holy One” most eminently rested upon him. The impression produced upon the crowded audience was of the highest order. Notwithstanding the extraordinary length of the discourse, it was heard, not merely with unbroken attention, but with overpowering interest and delight.

It was founded upon the following passages of Scripture: i. Cor. 1 26—31.

“For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are; that no flesh should glory in his presence. But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: that, according as it is written, he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

“Within the last hundred years, (said the Preacher,) many and great changes have taken place in the general arrangements of society. The hand of God has been lifted up in anger. Wars of long continuance, and of terrible severity, have afflicted the European nations. That hand has also been lifted up in mercy. Religion has spread with a rapidity unknown for many ages; and agencies have been called into operation which promise the greatest spiritual benefit to the world at large. As a religious community, we have judged it incumbent upon us to celebrate the centenary of our existence by acts of devotion; and it is for this purpose that we are now assembled together. The object which I propose in my present address is, to endeavour to make you sensible of the greatness of the benefit which we this day acknowledge, by setting before you what I conceive to be the true character of that system of evangelical doctrine, and of godly discipline, which, for the sake of distinction, and not with any sinister design, we call Wesleyan Methodism. There are persons who regard it as an evil of frightful magnitude, which admit of no just defence nor oven of palliation; and hence they most earnestly desire its extinction. I have no hesitation in avowing my conviction, that Wesleyan Methodism, regarded as a system of means for the spiritual good of mankind, and viewed in connexion with its direct influence upon the hearts and lives of men, is neither more nor less than a revival of apostolical Christianity,—the Christianity which is described in the New Testament, as the effect of apostolic preaching, and of that rich effusion of the Holy Spirit’s influence, which was graciously promised by the Lord Jesus, and which began at the Jewish Pentecost.

The discourse then assumed the character of a vigorous and comprehensive argument, which was designed to establish these two points:—First, That the Wesleyan Ministry was distinguished by a character strikingly similar to that which was exercised in the first age of the Christian Church; and secondly, That the effects of the Wesleyan Ministry are perfectly identical with those which the apostolic ministry was a means of producing.

We can only add two other extracts.

“One hundred years ago, the Wesleys were led to renounce the ascetic and mystical philosophy of William Law, and embrace the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ in its simplicity. Then it was, and

not before, strictly speaking, that Christ was made unto them ‘wisdom.’ It was not long before they were enabled to believe in him, as the great and all-sufficient atonement for sins: and they felt, with the early converts, that he was made unto them ‘righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.’ They rejoiced in his pardoning mercy, in his sanctifying grace, and in the bright prospect of eternal glory. It was ‘of God’ that they thus embraced the truth, and were made new men. Constrained by the love of Christ, they declared to others what great things the Lord had done for them, and the manner in which he had made them free from the guilt, the dominion, and the misery of sin. In the midst of much opposition, many believed the report, and, in the same manner entered into the glorious liberty of the children of God. The work, small at its commencement spread from man to man, from family to family, from town to town, and from nation to nation; and it still spreads, with undiminished energy, carrying peace and holiness in its train. Myriads of people in our societies, at this day, enjoy the salvation which the Wesleys obtained in the memorable Whitsun-week, in the year 1738, and which, from that time, they recommended to all men, as ‘the common salvation.’ Who can estimate the amount of good which has arisen from this work since it first began?—the personal and domestic comfort;—the spiritual life infused into other communities;—the happiness enjoyed by the ten thousands of glorified human spirits now in the heavenly paradise; and the multitudes of people, in different parts of the world, who are on their way thither, and will soon share in the same bliss? Perhaps scarcely an hour passes, in which one person, at least, belonging to the Wesleyan section of the catholic church, does not die in the Lord, and enter into rest. At every stage of its progress, this work has been carried on, not by an agency possessing in itself any inherent power, but by an agency which the world has despised, and even laughed to scorn. Yet is the work every way worthy of God. It is a holy work;—it is big with mercy to the world;—and it has triumphed over formidable difficulties and opposition. Controversialists have assailed its Theology; a fierce democracy has attempted to subvert its godly discipline; private influence and the public press have leagued themselves to effect its overthrow. Argument, philosophy, satire, ridicule, sarcasm, misrepresentation, have all been brought to bear against it. Yet not only are our ministry and discipline preserved in all their efficiency, but the great design of both is most blessedly realised. In our congregations, conversions are perhaps as numerous at this day as they ever were. Often has our religious communities been tried as by a fire; but it has never been forsaken, and never been in despair. Adversaries without, and false brethren within, have filled us with alarm; but the Lord has always sustained and delivered us,—he has made us at this day a more numerous and a more united people than we ever were at any period of our existence—and he has given us means and opportunities of usefulness to the world far beyond what we previously possessed.”

“To a course of diligent and persevering labour for the spiritual good of mankind, we are bound by the peculiarities of our creed. We believe that all men, without exception, are redeemed by the death of the Son of God, and may therefore obtain eternal life through him. We believe that the holy Spirit’s influence, in the first instance, waiteth not for the call of men, but is freely and spontaneously vouchsafed to every child of Adam. We believe that the actual salvation of mankind is conditional, and is often made to depend, in a great measure, upon human instrumentality; so that one man may perish in consequence of another’s neglect. We have received these principles, not as matters of speculation, nor as