

into darkness if they might haply find some gleam of hope for the soul; to the dying, on whose glassy eyes the film is gathering, and through whose veins a mortal languor creeps. 'Good will to men!' To all men! Oh, it is exquisitely beautiful. Let no experimentalist dislocate its perfection of beauty. Oh, it is a grand proclamation of universal love. Let no man dare to Judaize it! 'Good will to men!'—however fevered, however leprous, however hoary the man; however persistently he may have rebelled; however remote he may have wandered;—to men, although they have done their worst to ruin themselves, either degrading themselves into the indifference of the brute; or although, like the demon, they have kindled into the frenzy of despair. And there never was a time when it behoved us, the great Methodist people, solemnly, and before God, in a spirit of vaunting, but in the spirit of earnest and holy resolve, to take our pledge, our gage, and battle with sin, and the devil, and the world, more thoroughly and more heartily than we do this day. There are signs around us at home; and there are signs around us abroad. When I look around us at home, I see, as it were, a reproduction of all the old elements that were present at the time of the Saviour's advent. There is the austere and courtly Herodian; the gay and flippant Sadducee; the proud Pharisee gathering up the ruffled fringes of his ecclesiastical prestige, flaunting scornfully past me into the sanctuary. I see them all,—as the Jewish opposition are present amongst us; active, earnest, bitter, some of them, unfortunately, malignant at this day. There is a dread and fell infidelity, an infidelity of whose existence in its blasphemous form I was hardly aware; but some one honoured me by sending me one of their publications the other day. There is a terrible onslaught against all that we consider of good report and lovely amongst the churches themselves. There is,—alas! that it should be so,—a disposition to whet, to sharpen the sword of controversy, when charity unhappily goes, bleeding from the contest, smitten with many wounds.—Now, when Slander has unfortunately come out among the Aids to Faith, and needs to be rebutted by Aids to Truth and Charity, there never was a time when there was greater need, in looking at the signs of the

times at home, that we, as good Methodists, by God's grace, should go on our steady—private, if you like—unostentatious, but unfaltering way, preaching the glad Gospel of Christ, and spreading scriptural holiness throughout the land and throughout the world. I think that we are prepared to do it. Our zeal is not to be an occasional thing. It is not to evaporate in ebullitions of this sort at a public meeting. The Church is ill served by the heat of occasional passion; but it should be a continual energy which, in lowly imitation of the Great Master, opens its hand, pours out its wealth and blessing, and never says it is enough. I am afraid sometimes there are fears of a Christian investing his energy as he invests his money—as if a dead, unworthy, sordid coin, with the image of its Cæsar, were at all equivalent to a man, with a heart, with a faith, and with a will. We want personal service; we do not want recreants from the personal service of the Redeemer. We do not want any one to go away from service, condoning for his forsaken labour by his willingness to direct and to subscribe. If the work is good it is always good. It is good for all people; it is good for all times; the portion of the rich as well as the treasure of the poor; good by whomsoever recommended, good by whomsoever disgraced; good although the stammerer advocate it in his painful words; good although in eloquent words, it speaks in living thunder. It is good always, on all occasions; and we are going, sir, on this occasion, under your presidency, to bind ourselves to this work to-day. We shall do it; we will not forsake the cause which has been honoured and hallowed by God's blessing of old. Our kings uncrowned are in the midst of us to-day, and their royal example shall come to us from the past. Is it so, that of the founders of this Society, not one remains? Is it so? Are we entering on another generation? or have we venerable men, who yet linger amongst us like birds of paradise, of whose beauty we are not quite conscious until we catch the last gleam of glory that flashes from their parting wings. Are they in the midst of us just to remind us of the past; to show us how holy and how powerful and how near to God men used to live in the days of our fathers? O, do not let us shame our ancestry! Do not let us live, or rather