

ing medium for the transmission of certain theological formulas is established instead. The only direct dependence of these preachers being on the Conference itself, (since they have no enduring local adhesions,) they are made to derive their only importance and subsistence from an ecclesiastical body which entrusts them with certain cut-and-dried truths, to be by them delivered on their religious circuit. And if anything could tend to prevent their theology from growing more refined, human, and universal, it is this absence of permanent personal relations with those whom they are accustomed to address and teach. The Wesleyan theology, even in the powerful mind of its great founder, had always a rather rigid, not to say coarse, moral and practical cast — a tendency to crystalize into hard formula the personal experience of a specially energetic and dry species of character — and to demand such a creed in others as the only adequate test of religious faith. This rendered it peculiarly easy to present to the minds of the working classes through the medium of partially-educated men, who can always grasp and apply a clear, sharp set of practical rules, where they would be utterly unable to sound the depth of a theology fitted to meet the subtle and varying wants of universal human faith. Nor is the Wesleyan practice of itinerary preaching favourable to the discovery that their system of theology is one-sided and superficial. On the side of the congregations the frequent novelty tends to divert the mind from the faith to the preacher and his peculiar merits or demerits of mere manner or form. On the other side, the want of permanence in the pastoral relation tends to remove the possibility of deeper insight, and to present man as a creature to be preached