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For the Provincial Wesleyan. THE CONFERENCE OF E. B. A. IN ITS MISSIONARY ASPECTS.

We owe our position as a Church and Conference, in these Provinces to as pure a Missionary spirit as ever influenced men to leave their native shores, as heralds of the cross among the destitute. The honored name who planted the Standard of the Cross among us and whose names are our household words,—our Black, McColl, Canswick, Webb, Knight, McNair, and others who have passed away to their eternal home or are waiting in the evening of life to be conveyed there—are worthy of honorable mention with any of those zealous Missionaries who have spent their lives in preaching the Christian name, but larger multitude of the means of grace, living at ease in our midst, and having in many places, neither the form nor the power of godliness. With the holy fire burning to a bright blaze in their hearts, and a zeal and self-forgetfulness never surpassed, they journeyed on horseback, on snowshoes, on foot, in canoes, through every part of our country and around our shores, calling men to repentance and pointing them to the Lamb of God. What would have been our condition if they had not come among us? Our fathers and mothers who have died rejoicing in hope of glory, whose memories and living words are dear to us, held from their lips the words of life, and to all have appeared, without the Methodist itinerant would have lived and died in sin. We, the descendants and successors to the religious privileges of those who sleep in Jesus, owe a debt of gratitude which time cannot repay to the self-denying men through whose agency these results of teaching in our country have been secured. It will not be long for us, if we ever forget this indebtedness. The record of the labors, trials and successes of these God-honored evangelists would be more full of interest and profit to us than even the thrilling biographies of Western pioneers. Perhaps some future historian may gather the traditional and historical fragments and unite them in a sitting and enduring memorial.

It may not be generally known that a part of the territory embraced by our Conference enjoys the distinction of having been favored with the first Methodist sermon preached in America. It was in the Autumn of 1766 that Barbara Heck, in New York, urged upon Philip Embury the duty of preaching to his friends and neighbors of their evil ways. But a year previous, Lawrence Coughlan, who had, at the request of Mr. Wesley, been ordained by the Bishop of London, was sent to Newfoundland, opened his commission there, having the "whole island" for his parish, and preached the first Methodist sermon in the West Indies. It is an honor and we are grateful for the distinction conferred. And with a Conference embracing 129 Ministers in the active work, a large proportion of whom have been raised up among ourselves,—a membership of over 15,000 (not more than 15,000 children in our Sabbath Schools, and with such a glorious death-roll, and with so many of our pious dead a part of this family circle) we should on lowly bended knees thank God for the great increase.

But, there is a question which forces itself upon us in view of these facts, and to every thoughtful member of our Church, it is one of interest. What are the reasons of a Conference doing to help on the grand Missionary movement? The recipients of the gift of God through the agency of faithful missionaries, what efforts are we making to spread the knowledge of that grace among others who are destitute of it. It is quite evident that as a Conference we labor under serious disadvantages. There is a striking resemblance in some respects between our position and that of the Irish Wesleyan Conference. Large numbers of those who would naturally be expected to increase our Membership and fill our pulpits and contribute to our schemes of benevolence are borne away to other countries and many of them are true workers for God in their adopted homes. This is a serious drawback to our plans and provides a serious question which falls to be answered—questions which fall to be answered by nature and not by the dubious utterances of uncertainty. Of these the future destiny of man is one. At last, however, a scientific solution has been attempted of the awful problem that for ages tortured the mind of man till life and immortality were brought to light in the Scriptures. Dr. Ivan Slavovsk, a distinguished Russian mathematician, has recently published a work entitled, "Mathematical and Physical Proof of the Immortality of Man." This proof is based on an application of the principles of combination to the particles of matter of which the world is composed, and is a new and startling development of the atomic theory. Immortality, it may be observed, as understood by Dr. Slavovsk, is not identical with the immortality of the Christian; but rather a new form of the eternity and indestructibility of matter. Be that as it may, his theory is the most curious that has ever engaged the attention of any eminent thinker. He assumes that there is an ultimate limit to the division of matter. It is true we can never conceive of matter that matter can be divided into particles too small to admit of further separation. Here, however, we have two extremes, both conceivable, but one of which, according to Sir William Hamilton's Law of the Conditioned, must be true. Dr. Slavovsk, as we have said, takes the former alternative. The world, then, on this supposition, is made up of a definite number of particles, yet, indeed, beyond the powers of human computation or conception, but not infinite. These atoms are perpetually changing place, and cutting into new and ever-varying combinations. But as they are limited in number, the number of combinations into which they can enter must also be limited. After myriads of atoms have rolled by, former combinations must recur. To make this clear, let us turn to an elementary principle in mathematics.

The combinations of things are the different collections that can be formed out of them without regarding the order in which things are placed, permutation being the term applied when this order is regarded. Thus the combinations of the letters a, b, c, d, taken two at a time, are ab, ac, ad, bc, bd, cd. Take three at a time, they are abc, abd, acd, bcd. Now it is mathematically demonstrable that the number of combinations to be made of any number of things, taking any number at a time, is limited and definite, and can be precisely ascertained by easily deducible rules. The same is true of the distinct sets of combinations made by taking various numbers at a time successively. Permutations are subject to laws no less rigid; but the permutations of a given number of things will, it is obvious, be vastly greater than their combinations. Thus the number of possible per-

mutations of the above-mentioned letters, taking two, three, and four at a time, is no less than sixty. To illustrate the number of changes in collection and combination, arising from a few things taken by twos, threes, fours and so on, it will be only necessary to state that in this way the letters of the alphabet would give 1,591,724,288, 887,292,999,425,138,493,402,200!

Now for the application. As the variations of four or of twenty-six letters are alike limited in number, so must be those of any definite number of atoms whatever, no matter how enormous it may be. The atoms composing the universe will, therefore, combine in a fixed, definite number of ways, and when these have been exhausted, former combinations must inevitably recur. "The time must come," in the words of our author, "when the earth will be in the same condition it is in at this moment, and has already been a vast number of times. The geological era which have made it what it is, will again work out their necessary results, and man will appear again, each individual being precisely the same individual he is now, born of the same parents, reared under the same circumstances, and living the same life." Here emerges the difference between Dr. Slavovsk's views of immortality and those generally entertained and sanctioned by Scripture. According to the latter, the soul is an immaterial substance capable of separation from the body and of a subsequent indefinitely protracted existence. The former entirely eliminates this conception, and regards each person as a mere aggregate of material atoms, the work of a blind and irresponsible fate. And whereas the commonly conceived idea of immortality consists in an uninterrupted personal existence, Dr. Slavovsk substitutes an infinite series of personal existences alternating by periods of atomic change so vast that the "reincarnated mind in its unending flight" sinks paralyzed in the attempt to compute and grasp them. Of these stupendous intervals we are of course wholly unaware. But it may be questioned whether this is any mitigation of so horrible a destiny.

For who would be? "Though full of pain, the medicinal hand, / These thoughts that wander through my brain." What a terrible solution is this of the great problem of existence, and what a ghastly scenario on all our hopes of a hereafter! Alas for man, "the roof and crown of things!" Shall he "Who lovel, who self-reliant, / Who would be? / Who would be? / Who would be?"

These things need not be. They should be well known to every member of our Church and of our families. No one should be ignorant of the views of Ivan Slavovsk, New Brunswick, P. E. Island, Newfoundland and Bermuda, there should come up to the unspiced voice, "By the blessing of God it will not be."

IMMORTALITY BROUGHT TO LIGHT IN MODERN SCIENCE.

It is not often, if ever, that Science, though called the hand-maid of Religion, has deliberately undertaken either the corroboration or the independent proof of any of the doctrines of Scripture. Whatever validity, if the expression is allowable, has been added to the Word of God by the interrogation of Nature, is the natural though unpremeditated result of a fact that both science and religion are in truth revelations of the same Deity, a fact which cannot lie. But there are some questions of the atomic theory, immortality, it may be observed, as understood by Dr. Slavovsk, is not identical with the immortality of the Christian; but rather a new form of the eternity and indestructibility of matter. Be that as it may, his theory is the most curious that has ever engaged the attention of any eminent thinker. He assumes that there is an ultimate limit to the division of matter. It is true we can never conceive of matter that matter can be divided into particles too small to admit of further separation. Here, however, we have two extremes, both conceivable, but one of which, according to Sir William Hamilton's Law of the Conditioned, must be true. Dr. Slavovsk, as we have said, takes the former alternative. The world, then, on this supposition, is made up of a definite number of particles, yet, indeed, beyond the powers of human computation or conception, but not infinite. These atoms are perpetually changing place, and cutting into new and ever-varying combinations. But as they are limited in number, the number of combinations into which they can enter must also be limited. After myriads of atoms have rolled by, former combinations must recur. To make this clear, let us turn to an elementary principle in mathematics.

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the rear of the "Rodney" tavern was crowded to suffocation. Into the midst of this babel Effie managed, with some dexterity, to find her way, heedless of the scenes around her, with eyes fixed to all but the object of her search, and with a heart dead to all save the scene of suffering she had left behind her in the lonely chamber. The young wanderer had grown weary and hopeless in her search, and was about to retreat on her steps, when, amidst the confusion of tongues which prevailed in the marketplace, she heard the voice of singing, and as she paused to listen, the sound grew nearer and nearer, and presently a slowly moving crowd emerged from a by-street and in solemn procession to the centre of the fair. "As this handful of godly folk sang with earnest voice a hymn of praise, the clowns hurled their coarsest jests at the singers, the dancing girls shrieked out their wildest laughter, and a jeering crowd, mocking the hymn-tune, began to sing—

Mr. Wesley's come to town,
To try to pull the churches down,
While a few of the more adventurous hurried stones and sticks at the leaders of the band. A great shout of laughter arose from the crowd when one of the foremost raised a dead dog high in the air just as Mr. Wesley was commencing his address. Effie, who had almost unconsciously followed the crowd, recognized in this last miscreant her father raving in the fury of his drunken madness. She almost fled towards him, and rushing into his arms fairly shrieked—

"O father, she's dying, mother's dying!" and she burst into convulsive sobs. For an instant the reeling drunkard seemed surprised to answer, but presently with a horrible oath he struck the child with his clenched fist, and laid her senseless and bleeding on the ground. A cry of "shame!" from his own comrades assailed him, and he beat a hasty retreat into the crowd behind. A good Samaritan was not wanting to poor Effie, one of the Methodist leaders—Francis Ward by name—whose pious memory is treasured in Wesley-bury to this day, lifted the pale and death-like form, restored its consciousness, and bore her tenderly to the chamber of her dying mother. It was not the first visit of this good saint of God to that lowly chamber. All that Effie's mother ever knew of love beyond the grave Francis Ward had taught her. But never had his labours been so moist as on this night when the feeble lamp of her life was flickering. In praise and prayer and cheering words of promise and hope divine these three "sacred vigils kept" until the midnight hour. One was absent here. A weeping daughter, kneeling by the bedside kissing with the passion of a fond girl the poor woman, and her eye with the chill of death, and a good man beside her was praying audibly. "Thy will be done."

Another year rolled by, and Wednesday wake-time had come again. In the low-browed "Rodney" were assembled, as usual at such seasons, a group of tipsy revellers. Effie's father was the number, and the talk turned—as it often did—on the doings of the "Methodists." This man was more profuse in words and blasphemies than ever, and he wound up an invective tirade by declaring that "Them fellows made a fool of my poor woman, and now they've made a fool of my silly wench, but mark me, George, they'll never make a fool of me."

The evening wore on, and by-and-by within a stone's-throw of the "Rodney" another company had assembled in a private meeting-house. Effie was the number, and the talk of this group was of Him before whom the powers of darkness tremble, and who keepeth the feet of his saints. Francis Ward was there, and his talk was heavenly. We, in these days of modern Methodism, seldom, I fear, experience the joy of such a love-feast as that was. There had been some glorious emancipations from the thralldom of Satan, and those who had been warriors in sin were become not less valiant in righteousness. O, what thrilling experience was theirs! What shouts of triumph rang in that "little heaven below!"

The love-feast was just concluding when there was a noise without. Jeers and threats, blasphemous parodies of hymns and prayers, were followed by a loud knocking at the door, and in a moment a host of revellers had burst their way into the building. The worshippers, alarmed, and offered no resistance. Effie, glancing at the ring-leader, recognized her father, and as Francis Ward was about to speak, she stepped him by a whisper, and rose herself to face the foe. Had a vision appeared to these rough, rude revellers, they could not have been more dismayed and silenced than by the presence of this fair young girl confronting them with mild, reproving eyes, and asking attention while she spoke. There was dead silence in a moment. Then she began in gentle words and silver tones to speak. The men who had come to do deeds of violence grew cowardly as her voice assailed them, and one by one they laid their weapons down and composed themselves to hear her through. The little meeting-house never had such a congregation before. The speaker made a fore of the poor woman, and she knelt back the silver hair, her warm tears fell upon the couch of straw. Some moments passed before another word was spoken.

"Effie," gasped the dying one, in feeble accents thus before, "bring—bring—bring—your father!"

There was such a tone of command in this request, that Effie, reluctant as she was to leave the chamber, dare not hesitate to enter upon her hopeless errand, and pulling her thread-garments tightly round her, she was threading her way in another moment through the crowded and noisy marketplace of a large Black Country town.

Vanity fair was at its highest pitch, and the motley crowds seemed almost bewildered by the number and variety of "sports" presented. Here were dancing-girls on stilts; yonder a set of merry-go-rounds. Clowns with painted faces were uttering ribald jests, and mountebanks were twisting their lithe limbs into shapes grotesque. For the rest there were bears and ladder baits, and a huge cock-pit at

The effect was wonderful. Tears stole unbidden down the cheeks of those unused to weep, and the lions were turned into lambs. Francis Ward exclaimed in triumph: "The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and a little child shall lead them. How are those words fulfilled this day?"

This was Effie's first sermon. She preached many afterwards, and won many souls for Christ; but no convert gave her so much satisfaction as the leader of that godless band, who, on the next Sabbath, was heard repeating amidst triumphant tears, "He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings."

A LOOK BEYOND THE VEIL.

BY MRS. H. B. STONE.

Our departed friend—where is he? Often has he left us before a season, but then we expected him back. We kept his place at the fire, at the table, his clothes in the drawers, his books and papers and all the daily belongings of his household life ready for his return. Meanwhile, he wrote, or otherwise, we heard from him. We could write to him and get an answer.

Now there is another departure more striking, not more severe—a final one. He has gone out of the house and we expect his return no more. There is to be no more his place at table—no more his presence at the fire-side. We cannot send him a letter and get a reply. He has crossed the river, but a heavy mist lies over the other side. Now we put away his books and papers, the companions of his daily toil, the instruments of his daily labors, his clothes—whose very appearance seems to us a part of his personality—because so painfully suggestive. We hide them away he will never wear them more.

Where is he? Faith answers for the good man, that he is at rest—at peace. But just where, just how—in which of the "many mansions" of the Father's house? We long to know more definitely.

The Bible tells us one thing about that state into which we have passed. That world is under the government of Christ. So he declared to St. John when he appeared to him in glory: "I am he that liveth and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of Hades and of Death."

This much then is certain, our friend has passed to a world where the Lord Jesus reigns, where all things are under his dominion. In that realm, Jesus declares himself to be, "He that openeth and no man shutteth, and shutteth and no man openeth."

It is comforting then, to think that the arrangement of that life to which our friend has entered, is in the merciful hands of our Divine Redeemer. And it is infinite compassion to us that he remains again to He once died himself, and has risen again to a new immortal life, so that the whole of that mysterious, dreaded experience has been fully proved by him.

If we admit, then, that this great Spirit-world into which souls are all the while passing is Christ's special dominion, the world where He arranges, and where things are done according to his will, we shall feel at once that, as compared with this world, it must be a land of love, peace, order and beauty. Its "many mansions" are arranged with tender reference to the exact needs, needs and state of moral progress of each soul.

It was the opinion of the early Christians of the soul passing to that new state of existence, arrived there in a state of comparative immaturity. All is new and different—another mode of life, other and higher laws, in which the angel friends who have gone before are the educators. In the old Italian religious paintings, the death scene of a saint generally represented the body stretched out and lifeless, among weeping friends, while angels are bearing an infant upward in their arms, by which they represented the new born soul. There is an exquisite little painting of this kind by Fra Angelico, in Florence, representing the death of the Mother of Jesus, in which our Lord is receiving her soul as an infant into his arms. The same is in analogy with all the Divine modes of operation which we know—transition to new modes of existence suggest gradual development.

We may also suppose that the sphere of the new born immortal will be mercifully regulated according to his spiritual progress. Not all really good men strike us as adapted to the same sphere in the Spiritual world. There are those who, like St. Paul, lived in this mortal life, always desiring to depart and be with Christ—longing to be dissolved, weeping as they wept not, rejoicing as they rejoiced not. Their whole life is in the things out of the body, their life work in this world is not dealing with its physical forces or its material economies, but solely with spiritual conditions. These are the highest order of saints. By their religion is kept up in the world. They are called to be their teachers, apostles and seers, and have special spiritual adaptations granted to them. The early Christians, as a body, were such men and women, and if they had not been, Christianity never could have made its way through such obstacles. But in the great movement of human life there must be men whose work must be in the things of this world. In order that they may work well in them, they must throw their enthusiasm into them. The Doctor must be an enthusiast in medicine and the study of pathology; the Lawyer in science and practice of law, and so on down through countless armies of men and women who are called to administer the affairs of this mortal life. That they should love their work and all its accessories is as much desirable as that the soul called to be apostle or martyr should forget all things seen, and desire only to be dissolved and be with the Lord.

There are excellent men and women in this world, who seem to us more adapted to live here, than in the spiritual world. Among them are faithful Christians, who, if called to it, would cheerfully lay down their life for their religion. But their earthly nature is strong and vivid, their faculties and adaptations are to things seen and visible, and they have very little of that spiritual instinct, shrinking strongly, the animal and instinctive, shrinking from death and the unseen world.

When Walter Scott wrote some sermons and was ridiculed for it, as if he had no business to meddle with spiritual things, he said in a letter to his friend that whatever his faults might be, he was so real a Christian that, in event of another persecution for Christianity, he felt that he should cheerfully be willing to lay down his life for it. Yet, Walter Scott loved Scotland and its traditions—loved his farm, his trees, his horses, and his dogs, and filled into this present life and was immaturely developed for the spiritual one. In his later years of desolation and decay, he said of books: "There is but one," meaning the Bible; and his dying words to Lockhart, repeated again and again, "Be a good man—nothing else is worth anything." He was then growing towards the spiritual sphere.

It appears to us that these stages of development and progress may be regarded by our merciful Lord, and that by gentle transitions He may lead us from regions not unlike our earth, and, as it were, shading off into our mortal life—upward and onward—as we can bear it, to those things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive.

We may conceive our friends gone into Christ's world, not in a state of vague rapture and ecstasy, or of blind absorption into the Divine nature, but in a "home" of rest and quiet adapted to their nature and progress—home with duties, with varied employment, with social intercourse and friendship, with opportunities for advance in all knowledge, and with a wide and widening sphere of usefulness. One of the afflictive things connected with the passage of our friends into the unseen world, has been a sort of loss to us of their individual identity. In the vague ideas of blessedness and glory we lose the personality and the distinctive traits to which our minds cling. Our warm-hearted, active, ardent friend, full of cheerful mirth and joyous humor, is gone, and in place we have a conception of a solemn angel, rapt away from earth in a distant divine locality.

But let us look at Christ's life on earth—and remembering that Christ is the Lord in that visible world—see how he united the most exalted spirituality and divine communion, with the most exquisite human naturalness. There is that about Jesus so warm, so human, so simple and comprehensible, that in every clime and country, each mortal being, whether Indian, Malay or Negro, had only to hear his story to love him as a heart friend. How he always respected human individuality! He adapted himself to it in his disciples with a paternal tenderness. He did not treat John, and Peter and Thomas alike. He knew that John was a poetic idealist, and Peter an impulsive, energetic man, and that Thomas was by nature a sincere skeptic, and varied his treatment of them accordingly. He offered to Thomas the proof his doubting mind required, and which he gave to no other. "When Martha and Mary met him at the grave of their brother, he individualized them in the same way. Martha was a strong woman, capable of being addressed through her intellectual convictions, and so with Martha he reasoned, but with Mary he wept."

In the regulation therefore, of that spirit world, where he is Lord, we must expect the same scope for individuality. We are not to suppose all the faculties of this life cease their play, or that they gasp and smother in a vacuum, but that ample provision is made for their appropriate exercise. Our friend is in different circumstances; he has passed to a higher power and more congenial atmosphere, but that sacred sphere of individuality by which we know him from all others is unbroken. We shall know him again when we meet him—every innocent personality intact and secure.

Neither are we to suppose because they have passed thither, that our own temporal cares—the things that in our earth life, try, perplex and distress us, seem to them unworthy of attention. Because we see in the case of our Lord Jesus Christ, that while living with that supernatural world ever open before him, so that he could at any moment summon from it a legion of angels to bestow the tenderest sympathy for the least of human interests around him. Just as he was entering on the sublime public ministry that earth has ever known, he stopped to go with his mother to a wedding, and his first exercise of miraculous power was to relieve an embarrassment in the festivity. Our departed friends will be clothed with the spirit of the Lord; and while they keep ever uppermost our spiritual advancement will regard with tenderness our earthly weaknesses and natural and innocent wants and cares.

Hope angelic spirits can minister to us, is a matter about which little is revealed. We are simply told that they do thus minister, that a sinner repenting gives them much joy—that each little child has its angel, that they watch the death bed and bear away the parted soul. Undoubtedly our friends when placed in their divine habitations, are under a divine law and discipline. They have their appointed sphere, and their duties, and do not follow the more prompting of an unbridled affection. They enter into the wisdom and calmness of God and what they do for us is regulated by his directions.

If therefore, we would feel them near us, it must be by our drawing near to Him who is their Lord, whose spirit inspires them, whose love controls them. We may remember that our Lord in his earthly struggles did not call on angels but on God. It was his Father whom he prayed to three times in his low extremity, saying the same words, and then the angels came to him.

We sincerely believe that it has sometimes been God's will to vouchsafe to faithful souls glimpses of the spiritual world, and by the loved vision or presence of the departed, seen in night visions or by vivid impressions of them, to relieve some crisis of agony—to give lightness, peace, and joy. But more often these ministrations, so gentle and equitable, and so single with the normal current of the soul as to be indistinguishable. It is cheering to hold St. Augustine's doctrine—that "when we purpose what they purposed, and seek what they seek, and show what they showed—then they pray with us uninvoked." Their presence with us may be in accordance with the great Spirit-

law. "Draw nigh unto God, and he will draw nigh unto you." In setting our affections on things above and seeking those things that are above, where Christ sitteth, we are taking the most direct means to come into nearness to them.

We are here upon this earth as a family of children, whose father has prepared for them a better home in a far country. We have not seen it, and do not know exactly how it looks, and the home where we at present sojourn is familiar and dear. When therefore one member after another is summoned to go forward—when the home is gradually being depopulated of this and that familiar being, sent forward to their future residence, there may come some dreary hours, and some natural sickness of heart.

We cling to what is—and dimly comprehend what we have never seen. Yet, what is our advance in life, but the gradual sending forward to another life of hopes, aims and aspirations. Nothing draws us so strongly there as the taking of friends. When a husbandman would mow a tree, he first cuts off its roots for a wide circle around. So each friend taken from this life is one root cut that we may be more easily transplanted to the Paradise of God.

What can we say better in closing, than the Episcopal Church God, who has thus together chosen in our communion and fellowship, as the mystical body of the Son, our Lord and God. Grant us grace as to follow his blessed aims in all virtuous and godly living, that we may at last come to those unspeakable joys which thou hast prepared for them who unfeignedly love Thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

(From the Methodist Recorder.)
THE CLASS-MEETING AND MODERN METHODISM.

THE CONFERENCE OF SAINTS SUGGESTED BY THE CLASS-MEETING.

The Church of Christ is composed of persons who have been called out of the world into the service of the Great Master, and there is a natural antagonism between the Church, whose duty it is to testify against the evil that is in the world, on the one hand, and the world, which hates the Church because its members have renounced worldliness, on the other. The people of God, being thus dissociated from the children of the world, instinctively seek communion with those who are like minded with themselves in Church-fellowship, for which every Church should offer the utmost facilities.

It is natural for men, as social beings, to join themselves together in societies, and from the earliest times we find them doing so. Hence of general definition, tribes, cities, towns, and families, as well as the great societies which have been established for the purposes of mutual protection and assistance of the members of which they are composed, as in the case of friendly societies, in which a number of persons unite to assist each other in times of sickness or need; political societies, which aim at promulgating certain party tenets; literary, and scientific institutions to promote the interests of learning and to encourage investigations in the various departments of science. And Christians have found it necessary, especially in seasons of peril and persecution when the line of demarcation between the Church and the world has been broad and strongly defined, to join themselves together in bands that they might worship together, unite in common prayer, encourage and comfort one another. When the Church itself has become corrupt, those who remained faithful and abhorring apostasy have been driven to form themselves into a religious society to protest against the errors of the times, or to worship God in secret when it was dangerous to meet together in public, and to exhort each other to increased fidelity and holiness. In the days of the last of the Old Testament prophets the entire nation of the Jews had grievously departed from God. The priests who should have taught the truth substituted for it falsehood, and sacrilegiously profaned the temple of the Lord; the people robbed God both of their hearts and his tithes. It is a dark and picture which is drawn of those days of general apostasy, and judging from the general character of the great congregation of worshippers in the Lord's house and their services one would be led to conclude that, vital godliness had expired. Yet even then there was a small remnant of faithful souls who feared the Lord and thought upon his name, and they met together for the very same purposes that modern Methodists meet in class, for we read that they "spoke often one to another; and the Lord hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before him for them that fear the Lord and that thought upon his name. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." (Malachi iii. 16, 17.)

It is sometimes objected that the class-meeting is not a divine institution, but the result of meetings of the saints in the time of Malachi, nor was the peculiar method of fellowship which the early Christians adopted when they had all things common and "did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart," although we know it was most acceptable to God. All orthodox Christians profess to believe in the communion of saints but it is not agreed how best this may be promoted. As there is no divine model laid down in God's Word it may have been intended that each Church should be left to make such provision as it might consider would be most likely to meet the requirements of its members. At all events our class-meetings were established in the first instance purely to supply a want which some of our brethren felt, and we cannot doubt that when such a spirit they are acceptable to God, and they have long been proved a most valuable help to the weak and to the young.

It is contended by many that all that is needed for the communion of saints is provided for in the administration of the Lord's Supper; but when we consider the manner in which that sacred rite is now generally celebrated, there is scarcely an opportunity given for Christian intercourse and conversation, which appear to be an essential part of Christian communion.

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