

the witness of the Spirit, and discerning the fruits of the Spirit. But some do not understand that witness, and perhaps for this reason do not receive it; hence these look only to the fruits. And those who take this course are frequently slow in attaining assurance. Mr. Wesley's platform leaves room for these. And those followers of his who have refused to imitate him in this, have awakened the prejudices of good men in other communions against Methodism.

Some have thought that profession of *assurance* ought to be required, because they are of opinion that assurance is involved in justifying faith. But Mr. Wesley was not of this opinion, because he distinguished between "justifying faith" and "the faith of a son." The latter includes assurance; the former does not. "The faith of a son," says he, "is a sure trust and confidence in God, that through the merits of Christ my sins are forgiven." But he says also, "I cannot allow that justifying faith is such an assurance, or necessarily connected therewith; because, if justifying faith necessarily implies such an explicit assurance of pardon, then every one who has it not, and every one so long as he has it not, is under the wrath and curse of God. But this is a supposition contrary to scripture as well as experience." (Stevens' *His.*, v. i., p. 320). Twenty years later, he adds this emphatic sentence:—"I have not, for many years, thought a consciousness of acceptance to be essential to justifying faith." (*Journal*, vol. vii., p. 495). It was, therefore, not on justifying faith, but on the witness of the Spirit and the fruit of the Spirit, that he founded the doctrine of assurance.

Is it not now apparent that Wesley himself intended the introduction to the General Rules to be viewed as distinct from the Rules themselves? And that while he gave admission on trial to those who had the desire to obtain salvation, that he might take special care of such, he yet intended also that the condition of full and permanent membership should be such conduct as gives evidence of having obtained *present* salvation, and having thereby received ability to observe the Rules. That in his view these Rules require that evidence of a regenerate heart be given, by avoiding what God forbids, doing what God commands, attending the means of grace, and desiring *everlasting* salvation.

Does it not also appear from the intentional omissions in these Rules, that Mr. Wesley, when laying this platform, wisely left with the Great Head of the Church the prerogative of deciding what is absolutely essential to true repentance, true faith and prayer; knowing that God himself infallibly discerns every one who has sincerely repented, rightly believed, and scripturally called on the name of the Lord for salvation, and will pardon, adopt, and regenerate all such; and that His regenerating act will evidence itself by their works, for others will "know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of Him." (1 John ii. 29). He knew also that it is then the duty of God's other children to "receive them, because God has received them." (Rom. xiv. 1, 3). And to judge of His reception of them, not by their opinions, but by their fruits. And hence it is only to this point that the Rules specially refer.

Is not a platform of this kind the only practicable method of combining