

Minutes of the British Conference of 1855.

The following is an extract from an article in the *Watchman* of Sept. 22nd, and the *Minutes* are always solemn, and at least one is peculiarly painful. In the Ministerial obituary we have this year nineteen deaths; and in the number of those who have ceased to belong to the Ministry, we find the names of nine individuals.

Considering that in Great Britain there are including Supernumeraries, upwards of eleven hundred ordained Wesleyan Ministers, the retirement of nine, from all causes, which in several of the above cases are known to imply no separation of heart between the individual and the Church, cannot be thought a high annual proportion. Nor can the obituary be considered heavy in point of number, though it is so in the amount of personal loss to the Church, from the deaths of promising young Ministers, and of such well known veterans as BENJAMIN CARVER, JOHN KERRAS, SAMUEL SUGDEN, J. C. CLENDINEN, and DR. BEAUMONT. Of the last there is a record full of cordial and noble praise, the only qualification of which is confined to a single point and to a very few expressions.

After the foregoing subjects we turn to the "Statistics," which are followed by the general statistics of the Connection. An increase, on the whole, of 2,120 Members is reported on our Missions and Societies abroad. The Church and Societies are flourishing at Canton, ONE Member, a record which we do not, but most interesting hereafter, when the Orient dawn has become day, and the "little one" a thousand; but the Foreign Statistics show that there are this year in China no more than six Wesleyan Missionaries, who are for the present all appointed to Canton, under our valued Evangelist GEORGE PIERCE, who, as he was the first of our labourers there, is the first "Chairman of the District." Our readers are aware that in the last year, to lament a decrease in Ireland of 454 Members, and in Great Britain of 3,310. In its annual address to the Methodist Societies, the Conference speaks on this subject in a paragraph from which we extract a sentence or two.

"It has pleased the Lord to permit our Body now for some years to be led through a process of painful discipline. Year by year the evil manifestly declines, and the hope of returning good brightens. Yet, on the other hand, we would not more overlook the solemnity of a dispensation which leaves us to report for five successive years a decrease in our numbers than we would sin, on the other, by giving a moment's pause to distrust and despondency. We would neither despise the Ministers, and conclude with our faint when we are rebuked of him. We would mourn the sheep scattered, the prayers hindered, the appeals and calls rendered powerless, by strife and unprofitable pre-occupation of the mind. We would humbly ourselves in the hands of the Lord, and the Church, and acknowledge that we are unworthy to bear his banner and to extend his kingdom. But from that dust we would urge the cry—(Psalm LXXX.)

"The Conference has also some valuable Resolutions on the spiritual state of Societies. No special services are appointed for the coming year, but the Conference urges impress upon the Officers and Members of the Connection a faithful pursuance of every religious duty, private, domestic, social and Congregational; it manifests great solicitude for the prospects of the "Classes," and the Church, and concludes with the following truly pastoral exhortation—

"The Conference learns with much satisfaction, that the Special Services, which were appointed to be held in the first week of January of the present year, were so generally held accordingly, and to manifestly attended with blessing, and has been further cheered by testimonies as to the gradual return of many of the Societies, previously in a depressed condition, towards a state of spiritual vitality and increase, and as to the experience of other tokens of the Lord's favour. At the same time, the ordinary Returns for the year show that the number of new members added, has not been sufficient to make up for the deficiency created by deaths, emigrations, and all other causes of decrease, although 12,620 are reported as new to the Trial for Membership. The Conference therefore seriously reminds all our Ministers in the different Circuits, that every motive exists for the use of steady zeal in every department of their sacred work; that they should be constant and watchful, and exert all their powers to the maintenance of our Societies, in their varied callings, to co-operate with their Ministers, putting away from themselves all worldly amusements, cherishing the spirit of prayer for the unconverted and perishing of mankind, and seeking so as to find their true happiness in delighting in God."

From the spiritual state of the Societies to the Connexion arrangements for the ensuing year, is a step which naturally suggests a pause and an interval. We shall accordingly suspend, at this point, our examination of the *Minutes*, and conclude with a tabular representation of the statistics of British Wesleyan Methodism and of all its Missions and affiliated Conferences which are this year given by the *Minutes* in a new and, we think, an improved form. To any Wesleyan Minister, or to any one who wishes to remark that the "Members" are all Communicants—that in fact, the following table does not by any means include all of the latter class, and that it gives only a *datum* for the calculation of the number of persons who are habitually attending the Wesleyan Ministry and worshippers in our congregations—

General View of the Northern Society and Ministers, and of the Connexion with the British Conference, and of the Connexion with the British Conference.	1854	1855	1856	1857	1858	1859	1860	1861	1862	1863	1864	1865	1866	1867	1868	1869	1870	1871	1872	1873	1874	1875	1876	1877	1878	1879	1880	1881	1882	1883	1884	1885	1886	1887	1888	1889	1890	1891	1892	1893	1894	1895	1896	1897	1898	1899	1900	1901	1902	1903	1904	1905	1906	1907	1908	1909	1910	1911	1912	1913	1914	1915	1916	1917	1918	1919	1920	1921	1922	1923	1924	1925	1926	1927	1928	1929	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934	1935	1936	1937	1938	1939	1940	1941	1942	1943	1944	1945	1946	1947	1948	1949	1950	1951	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961	1962	1963	1964	1965	1966	1967	1968	1969	1970	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981	1982	1983	1984	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030	2031	2032	2033	2034	2035	2036	2037	2038	2039	2040	2041	2042	2043	2044	2045	2046	2047	2048	2049	2050	2051	2052	2053	2054	2055	2056	2057	2058	2059	2060	2061	2062	2063	2064	2065	2066	2067	2068	2069	2070	2071	2072	2073	2074	2075	2076	2077	2078	2079	2080	2081	2082	2083	2084	2085	2086	2087	2088	2089	2090	2091	2092	2093	2094	2095	2096	2097	2098	2099	2100	2101	2102	2103	2104	2105	2106	2107	2108	2109	2110	2111	2112	2113	2114	2115	2116	2117	2118	2119	2120	2121	2122	2123	2124	2125	2126	2127	2128	2129	2130	2131	2132	2133	2134	2135	2136	2137	2138	2139	2140	2141	2142	2143	2144	2145	2146	2147	2148	2149	2150	2151	2152	2153	2154	2155	2156	2157	2158	2159	2160	2161	2162	2163	2164	2165	2166	2167	2168	2169	2170	2171	2172	2173	2174	2175	2176	2177	2178	2179	2180	2181	2182	2183	2184	2185	2186	2187	2188	2189	2190	2191	2192	2193	2194	2195	2196	2197	2198	2199	2200	2201	2202	2203	2204	2205	2206	2207	2208	2209	2210	2211	2212	2213	2214	2215	2216	2217	2218	2219	2220	2221	2222	2223	2224	2225	2226	2227	2228	2229	2230	2231	2232	2233	2234	2235	2236	2237	2238	2239	2240	2241	2242	2243	2244	2245	2246	2247	2248	2249	2250	2251	2252	2253	2254	2255	2256	2257	2258	2259	2260	2261	2262	2263	2264	2265	2266	2267	2268	2269	2270	2271	2272	2273	2274	2275	2276	2277	2278	2279	2280	2281	2282	2283	2284	2285	2286	2287	2288	2289	2290	2291	2292	2293	2294	2295	2296	2297	2298	2299	2300	2301	2302	2303	2304	2305	2306	2307	2308	2309	2310	2311	2312	2313	2314	2315	2316	2317	2318	2319	2320	2321	2322	2323	2324	2325	2326	2327	2328	2329	2330	2331	2332	2333	2334	2335	2336	2337	2338	2339	2340	2341	2342	2343	2344	2345	2346	2347	2348	2349	2350	2351	2352	2353	2354	2355	2356	2357	2358	2359	2360	2361	2362	2363	2364	2365	2366	2367	2368	2369	2370	2371	2372	2373	2374	2375	2376	2377	2378	2379	2380	2381	2382	2383	2384	2385	2386	2387	2388	2389	2390	2391	2392	2393	2394	2395	2396	2397	2398	2399	2400	2401	2402	2403	2404	2405	2406	2407	2408	2409	2410	2411	2412	2413	2414	2415	2416	2417	2418	2419	2420	2421	2422	2423	2424	2425	2426	2427	2428	2429	2430	2431	2432	2433	2434	2435	2436	2437	2438	2439	2440	2441	2442	2443	2444	2445	2446	2447	2448	2449	2450	2451	2452	2453	2454	2455	2456	2457	2458	2459	2460	2461	2462	2463	2464	2465	2466	2467	2468	2469	2470	2471	2472	2473	2474	2475	2476	2477	2478	2479	2480	2481	2482	2483	2484	2485	2486	2487	2488	2489	2490	2491	2492	2493	2494	2495	2496	2497	2498	2499	2500	2501	2502	2503	2504	2505	2506	2507	2508	2509	2510	2511	2512	2513	2514	2515	2516	2517	2518	2519	2520	2521	2522	2523	2524	2525	2526	2527	2528	2529	2530	2531	2532	2533	2534	2535	2536	2537	2538	2539	2540	2541	2542	2543	2544	2545	2546	2547	2548	2549	2550	2551	2552	2553	2554	2555	2556	2557	2558	2559	2560	2561	2562	2563	2564	2565	2566	2567	2568	2569	2570	2571	2572	2573	2574	2575	2576	2577	2578	2579	2580	2581	2582	2583	2584	2585	2586	2587	2588	2589	2590	2591	2592	2593	2594	2595	2596	2597	2598	2599	2600	2601	2602	2603	2604	2605	2606	2607	2608	2609	2610	2611	2612	2613	2614	2615	2616	2617	2618	2619	2620	2621	2622	2623	2624	2625	2626	2627	2628	2629	2630	2631	2632	2633	2634	2635	2636	2637	2638	2639	2640	2641	2642	2643	2644	2645	2646	2647	2648	2649	2650	2651	2652	2653	2654	2655	2656	2657	2658	2659	2660	2661	2662	2663	2664	2665	2666	2667	2668	2669	2670	2671	2672	2673	2674	2675	2676	2677	2678	2679	2680	2681	2682	2683	2684	2685	2686	2687	2688	2689	2690	2691	2692	2693	2694	2695	2696	2697	2698	2699	2700	2701	2702	2703	2704	2705	2706	2707	2708	2709	2710	2711	2712	2713	2714	2715	2716	2717	2718	2719	2720	2721	2722	2723	2724	2725	2726	2727	2728	2729	2730	2731	2732	2733	2734	2735	2736	2737	2738	2739	2740	2741	2742	2743	2744	2745	2746	2747	2748	2749	2750	2751	2752	2753	2754	2755	2756	2757	2758	2759	2760	2761	2762	2763	2764	2765	2766	2767	2768	2769	2770	2771	2772	2773	2774	2775	2776	2777	2778	2779	2780	2781	2782	2783	2784	2785	2786	2787	2788	2789	2790	2791	2792	2793	2794	2795	2796	2797	2798	2799	2800	2801	2802	2803	2804	2805	2806	2807	2808	2809	2810	2811	2812	2813	2814	2815	2816	2817	2818	2819	2820	2821	2822	2823	2824	2825	2826	2827	2828	2829	2830	2831	2832	2833	2834	2835	2836	2837	2838	2839	2840	2841	2842	2843	2844	2845	2846	2847	2848	2849	2850	285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