

Charles Wesley's notions of attachment to the church; some began to wish a little larger share in the government; and a few did not rise to his standard of ministerial abilities, although of this he judged only by report. From this time a stronger feeling of disunion between the preachers and him grew up, which ultimately led to his taking a much less active part in the affairs of the body, except to interfere occasionally with his advice, and in still later years, now and then to censure the increasing irregularity of his brother's proceedings. The fact was Mr. John Wesley was only carried forward by the stream which had impelled both the brothers irretrievably far beyond the line prescribed to regular churchmen; and Mr. Charles was chafing himself with the vain attempt to buffet back the tide, or at least to render it stationary.

In the year 1751, Mr. Wesley, believing that his usefulness would be promoted thereby, entered into the marriage state with a widow lady of independent fortune; but this union was unhappy in its results:—for after a series of most provoking conduct on her part, proceeding from a groundless jealousy, she withdrew from her husband, and endeavoured by the most shameful means to exhibit his character in an odious light.

Mr. Wesley visited Scotland a second time in 1753, and preached to large congregations; but in the autumn of this year being threatened with consumption, brought on by repeated attacks of cold, he was prevailed on to retire to a pleasant village in the neighbourhood of London; and there not knowing how it might please God to dispose of him, and wishing “to prevent vile panegyric” in case of death, he wrote his epitaph as follows:—

HERE LIETH  
THE BODY OF JOHN WESLEY,  
A BRAND PLUCKED OUT OF THE BURNING;  
WHO DIED OF CONSUMPTION, IN THE FIFTY-FIRST  
YEAR OF HIS AGE.  
NOT LEAVING, AFTER ALL HIS DEBTS ARE PAID,  
TEN POUNDS BEHIND HIM:  
PRAYING,

*God be merciful to me an unprofitable servant!*

In 1755, at the Conference at Leeds, a subject which had been frequently stirring itself, was formally discussed.

“The point on which we desired all the preachers to speak their mind at large, was, whether we ought to separate from the church. Whatever was advanced on one side or the other was seriously and calmly considered; and on the third day we were all fully agreed in that general conclusion, that, whether it was *lawful* or not, it was no way expedient.”

Part of the preachers were, without restraint, permitted to speak in favour of a measure which in former Conferences would not have been listened to in the shape of discussion; and the conclusion was, that the question of the lawfulness of separation was evaded, and the whole matter was reduced to “expediency.” Mr. Charles Perronet and some others for whom Mr. Wesley had great respect, were at this time urging