

The Press and General Review

THE ITINERANCY.

We have been cautioned by a correspondent at Birmingham, against ascribing too much importance to Dr. Dixon's vicious ebullition of dislike to our Itinerant system. No doubt the aptitude to use strong expressions—an affectation in some of his brethren—is natural to him; and such escapades of good-humored fury from his lips must be taken *cum grano salis*. His friends in Birmingham, however, need not be very anxious because words not intended possibly to pass beyond the four walls within which they were uttered, have obtained a wider publicity. They must have perceived, in a contemporary journal, signs of disposition to view this sort of heterodoxy leniently. It is not unlikely that the denizens of Centenary-hall are as sensible of the wisdom of abstaining from throwing stones, as though they were the veritable inmates of Mr Paxton's vitreous palace in Hyde-park. We doubt whether Mr Dixon will ever be visited with any severer criticism than the terse remark of Sir Roger, that there is much to be said on both sides. At all events, if stones should be thrown, the first cannot legitimately be hurled by the gentleman whom Mr Dunn indicates as "appointed for the seventeenth time to the same chapels, though the Deed Poll says, no Preachers shall be appointed more than three years in succession to the same chapel."

The Itinerant plan was, in the first instance, a Scriptural device; in process of time, it has become a habit, and, we may add, a necessity. Our Contemporary the *British Banner* questions its accordance with New Testament rule and practice, holds it to be fraught with injurious consequences, and denounces it as a screen and refuge for the incompetent. In these opinions, there is doubtless some truth; but the writer looks at the object from his own point of view. As originated by Mr Wesley, itinerancy was most Scriptural, most Jesus-like, most Apostolic. The early Methodist Preachers "went about doing good," and, like their Master, were oftentimes outcasts, hardly having where to lay their heads. Like the primitive missionaries of the Cross, they went everywhere preaching the word. What could be in stricter accordance with the New Testament? And the plan is as Scriptural now as it was at the beginning; it is the practice that has deviated from the authoritative standard. Were the present race of Travelling Preachers as truly evangelists as their fathers, the Itinerant system would be seen to be simply and purely primitive and apostolical. Mr Wesley, it is evident, did not contemplate his lay-assistants in any other light than as evangelists. For pastors, if the Deed of Declaration has any meaning, he looked to the Clergy of the Established Church, vain and illusory as the expectation has proved. But Divine Providence having raised us up ample supply of pastors and teachers in the persons of the Leaders and Local Preachers, there is nothing to prevent the Travelling Preachers from continuing the evangelistic labors of their predecessors, except that softness and love of ease which has crept in among them.

Instead of laborers, our Travelling Preachers have become rulers; and here lies at once the departure from apostolicity, and the injurious operation which that departure has superinduced upon the Itinerancy. The ambitious and arrogant Clique who have seized the reins of power, have seen the advantage which a moveable ministry gave them, and have neither been slow nor scrupulous in using it. Mr Grindrod would not have made havoc of the Church at Leeds in 1827, nor would Dr. Duncan have thrown Lptafields into confusion in 1849, had not each of them felt assured that he would be well provided for, in some other part of the vineyard not yet laid waste by similar unfaithfulness, at the ensuing Conference. Neither would those reverend Destructives have either desired to act as they did had they been attached to their circuits by the ties of long-standing connexion, or dared to do so had their prospects depended upon the maintenance of good-will betwixt them and the people in those localities respectively. Were the Travelling Preachers still devoted evangelists, leaving the temporal care of the churches to the Stewards or Deacons, as in Mr Wesley's time, and the pastoral care to the leaders or Pastors, as was by him designed; did they copy the example of Apostles, not interfering with an authority which does not belong to them; but, in the midst of their evangelistic labors, confirming the churches,—then every Methodist in every place, would be disposed to regard every Travelling Preacher as something more, even, than a friend. But, whereas the tendency of modern practice is to a minimization of labor and a maximization of power, and Travelling Preachers show themselves disposed to regard their three years' sojourn in a circuit as a sort of spiritual pro-consulship, during which they have nothing to do but rule with a rod of iron, and levy taxes at the point of the Conferential bayonet,—there is a growing estrangement on the part of the people, who not unnaturally regard as aliens and usurpers, those who speak of nothing but power, and who appeal, not to the judgment and good-will of those among whom they are stationed, but to the sovereign power of a far-distant authority.

The *British Banner* is perfectly right in re-

garding the Itinerancy as the refuge of incompetency. It is also a bounty upon indolence—Here, however, large, very large exceptions must be made. There are scores of hard students, especially among the quiet men stationed in second-rate circuits. A greater mistake cannot be made than to take the gauge of Methodist attainment from the vain, boisterous, and frothy class of men who, by impudence or favor, often contrive to thrust themselves into the best circuits, where they delight to be the oracles of well spread dinner-tables and of drawing-rooms redolent with tea and coffee. But even the most respectable class of our Travelling Preachers have been not a little indebted to the Itinerancy for keeping them afloat during a protracted, and, on the whole, an honorable career. Within a few months we have lost, by death, four ministers of venerable age and respectable character, but one of whom would have stood the test of a stated ministry. We allude, as will be anticipated, to the late Messrs. Stanley, Reece, Atherton, and Vevers. The last, though a clever and well-read man, and a smart pamphleteer, would never have been endured as a preacher could his hearers have helped themselves; and was indebted to the Clique, to whom he had made himself useful in their straits, for the good circuits on which they imposed him, as well as for the comfortable localisation in which he ended his days. Mr Atherton, as we have recently intimated, was a perfect slave to the parrot-system; and even his faithful and capacious memory could with difficulty carry a sufficient supply for a triennium. Mr Reece found acceptance with the people through his bland though dignified courtesy, his bright character, his fidelity to many of the best points in ancient Methodism, and his punctuality and diligence in official duties, rather than through his preaching, which, though faithful and affectionate, was poor almost to barrenness, and spoiled by the most fantastical gesture and enunciation. Jacob Stanley, in deed, had stuff in him that would have placed him high among the Jameses and the Thornstons of Independency, had his lot been cast in the more congenial soil of Nonconformity. And yet, Messrs. Reece and Atherton, not less than he, had filled the Chair of the Conference; and Mr Vevers, the ablest man, but the worst preacher of the four, retired, not upon a supernumerary's pittance, but upon a fat sinecure.

By the way, Dr. Dixon's example has encouraged one of his brethren to come out rather strong against Itinerancy, as "a great annoyance to superior ministers who love their studies and the opportunity and necessity of producing perpetual variety of subjects in their pulpit ministrations." Though the man is a wag, and his tone arch, and though the stress laid upon "Banff" as a regular Goshen, looks suspicious, yet we suppose "James Kendall 1st" would be thought serious when he writeth as follows:—

"Divinity Doctors, with 'sunny studies, full of glad-some light,' must feel this inconvenience most acutely. I sincerely sympathise with them, though not a doctor myself. Their wishes, however, with regard to those 'originalities' and capabilities of 'suiting their remarks to the cases of their people better than in times past,' might be partly met by transition to Scotland. In most of our Scottish Circuits, the ministers preach very much to the same congregations. Many of the people are poor, but pious and intelligent. Some years ago I was stationed in Banff, and subsequently in Arbroath. I had no Preachers' plan, because none was needed. No Local Preachers, and almost no country places. The members in society were good people, chiefly of the working classes. But I had social intercourse with families of education—Clergymen, Magistrates, Sheriffs-substitute, &c. Now, would not a circuit like Banff or Arbroath be a regular Goshen, a very heaven upon earth to any Wesleyan Minister who delights in the pulpit to bring out of his treasury things new and old, and in the parlor or drawing-room to cultivate companionship with the National Clergy, the University Professors, and the literati? Methodism in Scotland has long wanted a succession of eminent Divines; and as there is no part of Great Britain where a Wesleyan Minister can so thoroughly, and to so great advantage, make trial of his intellectual strength, I could wish that a few of our first-rate men would, for the honor and glory of God, give themselves for three years to that highly-intellectual department of her Majesty's dominions."

Which of the Great Localized will accept the tempting solicitation? It would not require many (would it, Mr Kendall?) to supply "most of our Scottish circuits!"

From the Nonconformist.

REBELLIOUS AUTHORITY.

A more profoundly interesting, or a more instructive spectacle, than that now being exhibited to the world by the German Electorate of Hesse Cassel, it is impossible to imagine. Authority rebellious against all law, and subjects scrupulously intent on keeping within its limits—a prince claiming to derive his right from Heaven, and justifying his claim by trampling his own oath in the dust, and rudely commanding others to be equally regardless, and a whole people calmly standing by their institutions, and practically appealing to simple truth and right—a felon minister, the swiftness of whose heels ousted justice, striving, by every artifice, to overturn the social order he was placed in office to preserve, and society resisting every provocation to become anarchical—such is the teaching picture spread out before the world by the affairs of Hesse Cassel. The world, we have no doubt, will study it, and to some advantage.

Perhaps there has never yet been a struggle between prince and people in which the former was so totally, manifestly, persistently, wrong, or the latter so peacefully, perfectly, and obviously,

ly, right. Every step hitherto taken by the Elector, and by his reckless Prince Minister, has placed him at a greater distance from the well-wishes and sympathies of right minded men. No power on earth can enable him to govern the subjects whom he has outraged. Foreign bayonets may restore him to his throne but it can only be as a puppet in the hands of external power. By the aid of Austria he may worry his people, he may coerce them, he may fleece them, but he can never again rule them—never receive their allegiance. He is blindly preparing not only his own fall, but that, also, of all sympathizing German Courts. It is coming—the event looms from the mist of futurity—it is already near enough for us to catch a glimpse of its outline. Monarchy in Germany, at least in its present form, and probably, as it regards most of the reigning families, is doomed. With hotter haste than ever, it is filling up the measure of its crime, and speeding forward to its final judgment. It cannot last—the sentiment upon which it is based is being chipped away from under it by the violence of its own madness. It will leave itself nothing upon which to rest. It has been engaged for these two years past in tearing up its own recommendations to popular acquiescence. It stands forth to the view of all a palpable nuisance. It produces nothing but misery and disorder. It has insulted reason, alienated the sympathies of the good and is now arraying against itself all the forces of self-interest. It gets worse as it grows older. Everywhere throughout Europe, the fright which revolution gave it in 1848 has chilled its temper, and turned it mad. Depend upon it, retribution is not far off. Its judgment sleeps not. The world will wake up some fine morning, and be amazed to find all the present forms of monarchy on the continent swept away.

To what end else is the drama of Hesse Cassel being played? To what end do the Princes of Germany nitte in sustaining the foremost villain of the plot? How can the world look on and not learn, and mark, and inwardly digest? What is it they see, around which the sympathies of authority range themselves, and which princes are united to defend? The official guardian of law and order setting both at naught, for the mere purpose of exalting himself—condemned by the constitution, condemned by the Courts which interpret its functions, condemned by the unanimous verdict of his subjects, and, finally, condemned by the very army upon whose physical force he had relied. Who shall say that a man in this position, worthless, too, in all other respects, shall, by divine right, impose his will as law upon the myriads whom he despises? It is possible that the affairs of the world should proceed under guidance? Will civilization stop at the beck of an antic like this? Must intellect bend the knee, and manhood forswear its claims, and hope of human progress be extinguished, that such a creature may do his best without restraint? This is the problem the solution of which the affairs of Hesse Cassel will, sooner or later, bring about. The people have the game in their own hands. They have already tested the value of peaceful and passive resistance. Admirably have they borne themselves. Nobly are they discharging the mission with which they are entrusted to humanity at large. Triumphant have they asserted the claims of right against might. Let them but persevere to the end, and the crown of victory will be theirs. Governments may yet be taught by their means that there is nothing so impossible to conquer as the determination of a whole people not to do.

There is a talk of the intervention of Austria. Well, what can Austria do against a policy like this, consistently carried out? Suppose it to fill Hesse Cassel with soldiers. What then? Who are they to fight with, where there are no armed opponents? Austria may proclaim laws, but those laws may be peacefully set at naught—may exact penalties, but who can imprison a whole nation? If Hesse Cassel will but forswear physical force to the close of the drama, she will suffer less, both in substance and person, than a single battle would inflict, and she will win her object with the utmost certainty.

It is further declared, that if Austria forcibly intervenes in the affairs of Hesse Cassel, Prussia will oppose her. Should the simple threat suffice to deter Austria from the risk, which is not improbable, bankrupt and beggared as she is known to be, Hesse Cassel may, perchance, reap some advantage from Prussian policy—but not without a serious drawback. Prussia will ask in exchange for what she gives—and all her antecedents lead us to anticipate, that the terms she will impose will favour German princes more than German people, courts rather than constitutions. We have no radiant hopes in Prussian disinterestedness. It is not to princely quarters we look for the regeneration of Germany—much less to the present occupant of Sans Souci. Not The King of Prussia has proved too well his jealousy of constitutionalism at home, to awaken confidence in his pretence to stand by it abroad. Hesse Cassel, we fear, will lose far more than she gains by his protection. The horse cannot accept a rider and retain his freedom.

Upon the Hessians themselves their own victory must mainly depend. The moment they

exchange their civil and peaceful attitude for a military and revolutionary one, their cause is lost. Doubtless, it will require unexampled endurance to hold their hands amid so many provocations to violence—and hence, the peculiar need in which they stand of a sympathy which they could prize, and of encouragement which would strengthen their hearts. The British people formerly expressed their interest in Hungary—might they not, with at least as great propriety, cheer on the people of Hesse Cassel? In the first case, we saw a nation in arms battling for independence—in the last, we have an entire population, as one man, making their appeal to right, and leaning calmly on their institutions and their laws. Surely we might do a worse thing than ring in the ears of these contemptible German princes our unqualified indignation. Popular opinion in England, unmistakably expressed, goes for much more on the continent than some of our rulers and journalists would allow us to imagine. Practically, it is what despots most dread than parks of artillery. And it is a boon which we can give at pleasure, and ought to give promptly. It does not become us to stand by, and see a noble people dragged out of their solemnly guaranteed rights, without crying shame upon the princes who commit the crime. As impartial spectators, it behoves us, in the name of humanity, to protest against the gratuitous outrage. We cannot do more—but we ought not to do less. We are not, it is true, constituted the guardians of other people's liberties—but we are a portion of the great family of man, and nothing should be regarded as alien to us which affects the progress of human well being. The Germans mistakenly imagine that we look upon them with a jealous eye, and would be ill-pleased at their prosperity. We have now a fair occasion for convincing them of their error—and of proving that we watch with intense solicitude their noble struggle with "rebellious authority."

From the Times.

THE QUARTER'S REVENUE.

The quarterly statement of the revenue entirely bears out the calculations on which the important reductions of the last and some previous sessions were made. Although so many sources of revenue have been curtailed, or wholly cut off, it is only through accidental circumstances that the return for the quarter just ended exhibits a decrease compared with the corresponding quarter last year. The decrease on the Customs is only £1,389. There has been an increase of nearly £120,000 in sugar; about £30,000 in tea; nearly as much into tobacco; about £20,000 in raisins and currants; and about £7,000 severally in butter, molasses, wine, wood, and miscellaneous articles. On the other hand, the duty on rum and brandy, which during the cholera last autumn rose to so unusual an amount, has not produced so much this quarter by £200,000. There is also a decrease on the importation of silk manufactures, of corn, of cheese, and of some other articles, leaving the Customs of this and the corresponding period nearly the same. We believe that the decrease on spirits has been chiefly during the last six weeks of the quarter, possibly owing to the abatement of the fears, which at one time prevailed, as to the return of the cholera.

The quarter's Excise is £184,234 less than it was last year—a falling off more than accounted for by the repeal of the duty on bricks. In the corresponding quarter last year, about £240,000 was received under this head. This quarter, instead of an income, there has been an outgoing, £23,000 having been repaid on account of brick-makers' stocks. The remission of the brick duty, therefore, has made the difference of £263,000 in the revenue of the quarter; so that but for the abolition of the duty, the Excise should exhibit an increase of about £80,000. The increase has been chiefly on malt. On the stamps of the quarter, the receipts have been £179,719 less than last year, owing to two causes. The quarter's receipts from Land and Assessed Taxes have fallen off £16,444; and from the Property-tax, £46,142. Owing to the greater punctuality with which these taxes have been paid this year, the collection has fallen in previous quarters. On the other items of the revenue, there is nothing to remark. The total decrease from a year's, in the ordinary revenue of the quarter, affecting two small items of increase, is £418,103—a very serious amount but for the satisfactory explanations given above.

The comparison of this and the previous year is highly favorable. The Customs exhibit an increase of £81,242, and the Excise an increase to the amount of £531,186. This latter sum is the balance, we believe, of the following items—an increase of about £50,000 on hops; £12,000 on licenses; £400,000 on malt; £32,000 on paper; £37,000 on soap; £358,000 on spirits; £12,000 on railways, and other public conveyances, amounting in all to £901,000; against £252,000 lost by the repeal of the brick duty, and £119,000 repaid on account of stocks on hand, these two items amounting to about £371,000. A decrease of £182,433 in the Excise of the year has been already accounted for in our comparison of the two quarters, when we pointed out two important alterations which made it a great object to buy stamps before October 10, 1849, and after October 10, 1850, just excluding the year under review. The