

great tree, so that it now affords shelter and healing to tens of thousands in different parts of the earth. The increase which has taken place in our societies of this town is a fair type of our increase in most other places where the Ministers of our Body have laboured for any length of time. But we are prevented from entering on such a review by the pressing claims of subjects connected with our present condition and future prospects. To some of these, therefore, without farther preface, we invite your prayerful attention. It will be admitted that the present are eventful times; and the position which we occupy, as a religious community, is commanding, peculiar, and fearfully responsible. From the beginning we have stood pledged to the world's conversion to the faith of Christ; but by a series of recent events we have of late been brought into more direct collision with Popery, Socinianism, infidelity, and idolatry, in various part of the world. Against these diversified forms of error we have drawn the sword, and we must throw away the scabbard. The prize for which we and our fellow-Christians of other denominations have to contend, is not truth, civil and religious freedom, personal salvation, the evangelization of the world, and the glory of God, separately considered, but all of them together. In addressing ourselves to this great enterprise, we must make God our refuge, and aim ourselves with the same mind that was in Christ. Not only will worldly wisdom, and a time-serving expediency, be insufficient to guide us, and mere natural courage insufficient to sustain us; but the piety, the zeal, and the intelligence of former times will fall short of the exigencies of these latter days. The entire sanctification of body, soul, and spirit, the unreserved consecration of our time, talents, and influence, to the interests of our Redeemer's kingdom, and the complete subordination of politics, science, and commercial pursuits, to the glorious realities of eternity, must become the objects of our steady aim, and the attainments of each member of our militant host.

We give glory to God on your account, brethren, that, through grace, you have already entered on this higher style of holy living, and of disinterested labour. Deeds of spontaneous benevolence, unparalleled in the annals of our religious community, have been performed by you in connexion with our Centenary services; and they are recorded on earth and in heaven as tokens of your gratitude to God for his former favours, and as pledges of your fidelity to his cause in future years. The same spirit of zeal and grateful benevolence which animates our societies at home imbues our Missionary churches abroad; and the accounts which we have received of their Centenary meetings prove that the character, principles, spirit, and operations of Wesleyan Methodism are the same in all the earth. With deep humility and glowing gratitude we cry: "The best of all is, God is with us." And while we continue to honour him by undivided ascriptions of praise, by the cheerful consecration to him of our substance, and by a free, full, and prayerful declaration of his love in Christ Jesus to a lost world, he will not fail to honour us, by strengthening our union, establishing our peace, enlarging our borders, and multiplying our converts. The increase of moral and spiritual power with which he has invested the Connexion, by means of the Centenary movements, has greatly augmented our responsibility: it is designed as a boon to the world; and instead of being self-complacent, we must labour to improve it by enlarged endeavours to promote the salvation of all for whom our Saviour died. With such responsibilities resting upon us, and such a sphere of labour before us, it is ground of thankfulness that we enjoy peace in all our borders; that no doctrinal or disciplinary controversy distracts us; but that a tender and fraternal sympathy prevails through the whole body. May the century on which we have just entered be one of uninterrupted peace, and of unparalleled prosperity! That this is the will of God, none can doubt; and each of you, dear brethren, may contribute somewhat towards its realization. Religion is love, pure love to God and man; and he who permits this holy principle to engross his affections, to constrain his will, and to command the entire energies of his nature, for the service of his Redeemer, is sure to be, not only safe and happy, but useful also, in his generation. Love worketh no ill either to its neigh-

bour, or to the church of God. On the contrary, it is destined, through the preaching of the cross, to subdue, unite, and felicitate the whole family of man. That you may be enabled to exemplify it in your speech, your tempers, and in the general tenor of your conduct, at home and abroad, towards friends and foes, see that you abide in the Son, seek to be filled with the Spirit, and use all the ordinances of God.

We greatly rejoice, brethren, that, while Wesleyan Methodism has loudly lifted its voice, and fearlessly exerted its energies, against essential error, and the various forms of ungodliness, it has always, and in the frankest manner, recognised the common brotherhood of "all them that love the Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity." Concerning the Protestant sections of the church of God, whether Episcopalian, Presbyterian, or Independent, our motto has been, "The friends of all, the enemies of none." In executing our commission of mercy to a lost world, we have found such ample occupation for our talents, and have been blessed with such a degree of success, that we have had neither time nor inclination to disturb the peace or alienate the members of other churches. If we have ever wielded the weapons of polemic warfare, it has been in self-defence; and even then, while with one hand we have grasped the sword with the other we have "buildd the wall." We wish we could say that our forbearance had been reciprocated by the dissenting denominations in the land; but we dare not. The selfishness of party is still learned; and in certain quarters its pronunciation is rigorously enforced as the only condition on which the right hand of fellowship can be extended. We need not say that we deplore this as a violation of the law of love, and as a practical renunciation of the fundamental principles of the Reformation. By many our catholicity has been reckoned our infirmity, if not our sin; and hence the censures which have been heaped upon us because of our independent position with respect to the Established Church on the one hand, and to the different classes of Dissenters on the other. But being fully persuaded that the Most High has chosen our position, and assigned us our work, which is to spread scriptural Christianity through the world, we trust that neither censures nor threatenings, neither honour nor dishonour, will ever induce us to lend ourselves to mere party purposes. While we bewail the recent revival of Popery as a national calamity, we are neither surprised nor greatly alarmed at the popularity to which it has attained. In the exercise of its ancient "deceivableness of unrighteousness," it has assumed the garb of liberality, and claims to be the friend of education, and the advocate of equal justice. The profession is novel, and is therefore liked; the lie is bold, and is therefore believed: the mask is fair, and it passes with many for her true features. But others, unable to forget, and unwilling to deny, the concurrent testimony of history, believe that her delight in proscription, her hatred of the truth, and her enmity to civil and religious freedom remain unchanged. The brand of Antichrist is upon her. For she still makes void the law of God by her traditions. She invests her Priesthood with the prerogatives of Christ, and then interposes that Priesthood between Him and the people; not as a means of leading them to Him as their Saviour, but to teach them, that an immediate application to Him is in a great measure unnecessary. She first invests the sacraments with the power of conferring grace and salvation, not mediately, or through faith, but necessarily, and as a thing of course; and having done this, she places them between our Saviour and his disciples, not as a means of introducing them more fully into an acquaintance with his love, and power to save, but as substitutes in his stead. In these particulars, Popery, and the semi-Popery which is advocated by several Divines who bear the name of Protestant, are alike; and if either be true, we must not only lay aside the scriptural phraseology which we have hitherto used, in declaring what God hath done for our souls; but we must also blot out a great part of the Psalms, and of the apostolic Epistles, and renounce the obvious meaning of the Scriptures generally. According to both systems, there is, in reality, no justification by faith, no witness of the Holy Spirit assuring the believer of his adoption, no regeneration for the adult transgressor who may have been baptized in infancy, and no scriptural hope of final salvation for any persons who have not received the sacraments from a man who has been Episcopally ordained. But brethren, while we regard these systems as essentially opposed to the truth, and as forming an enormous barrier to the evangelization of the world, we rejoice that Protestantism is wrought into the very core of our national constitution, and is deep-seated in the affections of the mass of our population; that the Bible has found its way into the mansions of the rich, and the cottages of the poor; and that scriptural education is spreading through the land. Believing that our evangelical theology, our concentrated agency, and our constitutional loyalty, qualify us for effective service in this war of principles, we entreat you, in your respective neighbourhoods, and to the utmost of your power, to circulate our religious tracts; to befriended the Bible Society; to promote the attendance of the poor on the ministry of the word; and by the prayer of faith, and an unflinching maintenance of the

truth, to seek to dethrone Antichrist, and to effect the conversion of the whole world to God.

On the great subject of education, we are happy to announce to you, brethren, that the number of our Week-day and Infant Schools has been considerably increased during the past year; and that the happiest results have followed wherever well-qualified Teachers have been employed. Of these, however, there is a felt deficiency in the body; and our Educational Committee have been instructed to devise measures for securing a supply. From the deep interest which our people generally take in this matter, and the preparations which are made in many Circuits, we are induced to hope that ere long every considerable chapel in the Connexion will be associated with a well-conducted day-school; in which the elements of useful knowledge, at least, shall be taught, in union with "the wisdom which cometh from above," and on such terms as the poorest of our people may reach. But as this period has not yet arrived, permit us to caution you against the popular error, that the education of youth may, without risk, be discovered from the inculcation of divine truth, the performance of devotional exercises, and the enforcement of religious obligations. The Scriptures enjoin, that we bring up our children in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord." They teach, that religion is the one thing needful; that "the law of the Lord" is the way in which our children should go; and that the Christian salvation only can cure their spiritual diseases, supply their wants, and qualify them for bearing the afflictions and performing the duties of life. The Lord Jesus has said, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth." This declaration applies to every order of human agency; but it is especially applicable to the instructors of youth. Their influence over their pupils, whether for good or evil, is all but irresistible. Those parents, therefore, incur a fearful responsibility who place their children, either as scholars or apprentices, under the tuition of individuals who are sceptical in their views, or lax in their morals. The principles of our creed necessarily influence our practice; and he who hates the truth will not hesitate to advocate error. A professed indifference to all religious opinions is only a mask for secret infidelity; and the master who does not openly avow his faith in the Gospel cannot do otherwise than weaken the principles and shame the profession of the young who are under his care. "Every tree is known by his own fruit; for of thorns men do not gather figs, nor of a bramble-bush gather they grapes. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil." "The blessing of the Lord is in the house of the righteous." But in those households and seminaries where there is no recognition of Providence, no faith reposed in our Redeemer, and no stated worship offered to God, their can neither be blessing nor righteousness, but "confusion and every evil work." As ye, therefore, brethren, desire the salvation of your children, give all diligence to make them acquainted with the truth as it is in Jesus; enjoin upon them a daily perusal of the Scriptures in private; and rest not satisfied till you see them savingly brought to God. Being redeemed by the precious blood of the Son of God, and baptized in his name, they have a right to the blessings of the covenant, and may, with the first dawnings of reason, receive the grace of the Holy Spirit. When circumstances require that they quit the paternal roof, be scrupulously careful to place them under the care of those whose hearts are established in the faith of the Lord Jesus, and who will secure their attendance at the family altar, and on the ordinances of the sanctuary. To do this in the name of the Lord, is to plant them by "the rivers of water;" and having done this, you may confidently hope that they will bring forth fruit in their season; that their "leaf shall not wither;" and that "whatsoever they do shall prosper."

While we are most anxious to see religious day-schools multiplied, we cannot join in the language of depreciation which is often levelled against Sunday-schools. Many speak of these institutions as if they had proved failures; as if they had done little or no good, and were unsuited to the present times. To such sweeping conclusions we are decidedly opposed. On the contrary, it is our opinion that, apart from the ministry of the word, and the other ordinances of the Gospel, no instrumentality now in operation has effected half the good that these schools have done; and as the Ministers of Christ, appointed especially to care for your interests, we feel indebted to those of you who have, in them, devoted so much of your time and attention to the education of the rising race.

In the mean time, we suggest, that the formation of Bible classes, under experienced and intelligent Teachers, ought forthwith to be attempted on a large scale. The number of our scholars capable of appreciating instruction above the common course of Sunday-school tuition, is very great; and the objects desired in reference to them are, to retain them in the schools; to increase their knowledge of the word of God; to guide and gratify their thirst for general information; to attach them to our ministry and worship; and, ultimately, to effect their consecration to God, and union with the church. These ends, it will be admitted, are vast-