

in existence. To-day there are thirty thousand ministers, eighty thousand local preachers, five million church members, and twenty-five million adherents! Go back one hundred and forty years, and you will find no Methodism in Lancashire; but John Nelson, the Yorkshire stonemason, is announced to preach at the Market-Cross; I don't know where that is; some of you do, I dare say. He went there single-handed and preached, and that was the unfurling of the Methodist banner in Lancashire, and Manchester especially. A surging crowd of two thousand gathered around him, jeering, laughing, mocking, and some pelting him with stones. "By and by," he says, "one of them struck me in the forehead and cut my head open, and the people listened the more readily as they saw the blood streaming down my face." That is the stuff your fathers were made of. He rejoiced as he stood there with the blood running down his face, to tell them of the blood of Christ that cleansed from all sin. Three years passed away, and he would be tempted to say he had spent his strength for nought, and laboured in vain. But God had said, "My word shall not return unto Me void." The people have talked and thought about the sermon, and there comes a letter from John Bennet to Mr. John Wesley telling him that "some young men who had heard Nelson preach had been meeting together, anxious about their souls; and had formed a Society, taken a little room, and written to Charles to ask him to ask his brother to own them as brethren." One would like to have the names of those young men: That is the beginning of Methodism in Manchester. Think of it. Those few poor young men crowded in a little room in which a widow lives, and which contains a loom, a bed, a table, and a chair! And what do you see in Lancashire to-day? Eighty Circuits, two hundred and fifty ministers, eight hundred chapels, sixty thousand members, and one hundred and fifty thousand