

## RECENT INTELLIGENCE.

## CENTENARY OF METHODISM.

In our eighteenth number we alluded to a resolution of Conference, with respect to the approaching October in the present year, when the Connexion to which we belong will have existed 100 years. One of the Meetings, to which allusion was made, has been held in the town of Manchester; when a great number of wealthy and high spirited individuals attended, from many of the large towns in England, by special invitation from the President of the Conference. The Meeting lasted three days; and, at the close of that period, the amount of subscriptions to the Centenary Fund, actually on the list, stood at FORTY-SEVEN THOUSAND EIGHT HUNDRED POUNDS. Another Meeting was already advertised for London—and similar Meetings were to be held by adjournment, at Liverpool, Bristol, Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Hull, Newcastle, Dublin. In addition to these Committee Meetings, smaller local Meetings will be held in every Circuit, and throughout the whole Connexion at home and abroad; and we think that it requires no great exertion of mind, to admit the probability of there being raised the sum of £100,000. Instead of presenting our readers with an explanation of the intentions of the Committee, we shall give extracts from a few of the speeches, which will be found deeply interesting.

The first Meeting was held in Oldham St. Chapel, Manchester, on Wednesday, November 7. Present,—the President and Secretary of Conference, many senior Preachers, and about 250 laymen.

The PRESIDENT [Rev. T. Jackson] spoke as follows—

I feel that it is unnecessary for me to occupy your time by any lengthened introductory remarks; I cannot, however, consent to be altogether silent upon this most important, and, to me, most interesting occasion. It was just 100 years, the last summer, since the Two Wesleys obtained the "pearl of great price,"—the christian salvation. Mr. Charles Wesley, 100 years ago last Whit Sunday, received the blessing of conscious pardon, and his brother on the Wednesday following. This was an event of the utmost importance, not only to themselves, but to the nation, and to mankind in general. Up to that time, they had been, for a series of years, impressed with the necessity of personal holiness. They were convinced that true religion is an inward principle,—the life of God in the soul of man; and they laboured to obtain it by works of righteousness and law. They selected the finest hymns and prayers in all languages to which they had access;—they sang these hymns, and repeated these prayers, upon their knees, with great earnestness and sincerity, in the hope of obtaining this divine principle;—yet, after all, they felt themselves to be under the power of tormenting fear, and of inward sin. They wondered how this could be; but the mystery was unravelled when they were given to understand, that justification in the order of God precedes sanctification; and that justification is obtained by the simple exercise of faith in the sacrifice of Christ, the sinner being at the same time in a penitent state of heart. This most important discovery was the means of leading them to the enjoyment of permanent spiritual rest; and it was the preaching of this doctrine to which the great Head of the Church set his seal for a long series of years. I have been led, in consequence of the directions given me by the late Conference, to draw up a Manual on the subject, to examine the facts connected with the rise and progress of Methodism; and the result, so far as my own mind is concerned, has been exceedingly salutary and cheering. I am more deeply impressed than I ever was before with the providential as well as the gracious character of Methodism. I never before saw so clearly the necessity of this great revival of religion. The fact is, that the beginning of the last century was one of the most unevangelical and ungodly periods in our history, since the time at which the Reformation was completed in the reign of Elizabeth. There were, at that time, eight or ten infidel writers, whose works were in full circulation; and the consequence was, a wide abandonment of the christian profession on the part of the higher classes of society in this country, connected with a general prevalence of profligacy and

crime among the lower classes. Clerical duties were imperfectly discharged;—strenuous efforts were made by some of the most accomplished scholars of that day to set aside the great truths of christianity by the introduction of Arianism; and it is remarkable, that a simultaneous attempt was made thus to pervert the minds of the professors of Christianity, both in the Establishment and among the Dissenting churches. (Hear.) It was under these circumstances that the two Wesleys, Mr. Whitfield, and their noble co-adjutors, were raised up, to go forth in the name of the Lord, preaching the "unsearchable riches of Christ." (Hear.) The means which they adopted were peculiar. One of the most remarkable was that of field-preaching. Then followed the formation of religious societies, for the purpose of mutual inspection, and of stirring up each other's minds by way of remembrance;—the acceptance of the ministrations of men who had not been episcopally ordained;—and the publication of a large number of books, adapted to popular use, and widely spread throughout the community;—as well as the opening of separate places of worship, and the adoption of a simple, impressive, and effective mode of preaching the gospel. There has been a steady progress of that work from its commencement to the present day. This is the more remarkable, because every other special revival of religion in Europe has been of much shorter duration. Luther gave it as his opinion, that generally speaking, these signal revivals seldom last more than one age, or 30 years. This work has continued in steady progress for the long space of 100 years; and, as far as we are able to form a correct judgment, the work was never more pure and efficient than at this day. (Hear, hear.) I confess to you, that I anticipate great spiritual benefit to ourselves, as a religious community, from the celebration of this Centenary. The attention of our preachers, societies, and congregations, will be called to first principles; and we shall see what were the truths upon which our fathers laid especial stress in the exercise of their ministry. Our attention will be called to that yearning pity for the souls of unconverted men, that burning zeal for the honour of Christ, and that entire devotedness to him, of which our fathers were such a striking example. We shall be led to see how they laboured simply and directly to convert souls to Christ. They felt that they had done nothing, that their ministry had failed, unless men were turned from impenitence, worldliness, and sin, and made inwardly and outwardly holy by believing in the Son of God. I confess that I have felt the necessity of having my own mind thus stirred up by way of remembrance; and I trust in future to make more full proof of the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus. The same effect, I doubt not, will be general, and seen throughout the length and breadth of our connexion. (Hear.) I cannot but observe how exceedingly favourable is the opportunity now presented to us for celebrating the Centenary of this great work of God. Our societies are at present in a state of profound peace. (Hear, hear.) Had the Centenary occurred three or four years ago, there would have been great searchings of heart among us, and we should have had to encounter considerable difficulties in the enterprise. The way now appears to be prepared by the hand of God; and I trust that all our services will be attended with great spiritual good;—that the spirit of glory and of God will rest upon us;—and that the occasion will be marked by a deep and extensive revival of pure and undefiled religion. This is the primary object which the Conference has contemplated in the appointment of the Centenary. Connected with this is a pecuniary object, bearing upon our different institutions. I recollected that many members of this Committee came from distant places,—that many of them are engaged extensively in business, and that time to them is of great moment; I therefore, yesterday afternoon, requested a few of our friends to meet me in the vestry of Oxford Road Chapel, that we might converse upon the subject of our present meeting,—not to anticipate the decision of this General Committee, but that we might come with minds better prepared for deliberation. I believe that I shall have the general concurrence of this Meeting, when I express an earnest wish, that our esteemed friend Dr. Bunting would state the result of our yesterday's conversation. (Hear, hear.) It would bring the subject before us so as to save much time, and enable us to discharge our duty in the most effective manner. (Hear.) Before I sit down I beg, in behalf of the Conference, to offer you my very cordial thanks for your attendance this day, in kind compliance with the invitation which I had the honour of addressing to you in behalf of that body. (Hear.)

DR. BUNTING, in consequence of a general call, came forward and addressed the President to the following effect:—I had hoped, sir, that you would have pursued the course which you so judiciously adopted, in the Preparatory Meeting of yesterday, by taking means to elicit the sentiments and feelings of our friends, before you proceeded to ask any one, much less myself, to submit anything like a project for consideration, revision, alteration, or ultimate adoption.

It has been already agreed, then, that there shall be a Celebration of the Centenary, and that the primary object of this celebration shall be spiritual; and if, in the course of discussion here, matters not directly religious but financial shall occupy the larger portion of our time, it must not be supposed it is because we forget that the religious celebration is the primary and most important object, but merely because we are all so agreed about that, that there is no difference of opinion, except as to one or two minor points.