

My Mission just coincided with the Methodist Circuit. Now, doing my very utmost, I could only have three services on the Sunday; while on the same day there would be, throughout the same locality, some ten or twelve Methodist meetings—the Superintendent of the Circuit taking three, his junior three more, and the rest of the appointments being filled by laymen; and all this effected at but little more cost than our three services. Again; if from any cause I were absent from home on any Sunday, the Churches were shut, and the Church people invited to stay at home; while the Methodists could always meet at the stated times, even though their preacher were away. Again; suppose a Travelling Missionary of the Church is appointed to a very extensive field of labour. He comes to a certain place, meets the Church people, has service and so forth; and then goes on to his next appointment, promising to return, if possible, in a month, or two, or three, as the case may be. In the meantime the people have to look forward eagerly for the next service, but until then do without. On the other hand, a Methodist Missionary arrives—he holds his service—and he too promises to return in one, two, or three months, and goes his way. But note the difference! Before he goes, he takes good care to leave behind him *an organized congregation*, which meets regularly in the interval under the leadership of some layman appointed by him. When they each return, the Methodist Missionary finds his congregation have been kept together—while the Church Clergyman finds that the Church people have done absolutely nothing for their mutual edification, except perhaps to go and “hear” the Methodists, and, it may be, join them.

Now under all these disadvantages, how is it possible for the Church to compete with a system so ready to adapt itself to the peculiar needs of this country? It is not possible. It is utterly out of the question for us to hold even our own, unless we adopt, and that very extensively, a system of Lay Co-operation. And here let us enquire what kind of Lay Co-operation we need. It is not simply that help which we already possess, in the larger towns at all events, though perhaps meagrely even there. It is not, for example, the help of the Sun-