

lawful superior there, become insensibly jealous of all control and interference, and this principle will more or less affect him in all his general intercourse. Then of course the force of a principle thus highly sanctioned is felt through every part of the Methodist society,—and is manifested, as you are aware, in its local preachers' meetings, its leaders' meetings, &c. &c. This democratic tendency is not generally perceived; indeed I had been long a Methodist myself before I was fully aware of its existence. This is greatly owing to the personal character of the present leaders of Methodism. Dr. Bunting, Dr. Hannab, Dr. Jackson, Mr. James Dixon, &c. &c., are all men of decided Conservative principles, men who, being leaders, have risen above the injurious effect of Presbyterian equality. As yet, also, Mr. Wesley's writings on all these subjects, continue greatly to influence the Methodistic public, and his sentiments, though contradicted by some personal inconsistencies, are well known to be decidedly in favour of complete subordination. But these are only accidental, or perhaps Providential, correctives of those evils of which I am speaking; and you will allow that that system can hardly have originated in the wisdom of God, the successful working of which depends so entirely upon the personal character of certain individuals. Of all this I became gradually aware; I saw that while the vast majority of the preachers were sound and scriptural in their views of that humility and quiet subordination which become the christian character, large numbers of their people felt very differently, and were largely tinctured with the spirit of ungodly independence. A continued struggle was going on before my eyes, between the conference and the societies, in which the former was continually obliged to yield to the demands of the latter, because they had no Scriptural pattern, no Divine authority, upon which they could fall back; all was merely of men's ordering, according to what they believed a righteous expediency.

But it was not until I became a resident in Canada, that I was fully convinced of the evil working of the democratic principle in Methodism; for here it happens that some of the leading preachers themselves are men of extremely weak or, to speak more honestly, of absolutely wrong principles. The consequence is that their people are discontented subjects, dissatisfied Christians; not unfrequently malevolent feelings towards the leaders. Thus I saw Methodism in a position of great perilousness, and in a state of great confusion.

Mr. Brown—Well, but supposing I were to grant the existence of these democratic tendencies, which seem to have had so unpleasant an effect upon your mind, and which, upon reflection, I fear I cannot altogether contradict; yet, while I certainly deplore them, I cannot see how they could justify your forsaking of Methodism, because you know we are not a political, but a religious body.

Mr. Secker—That is very true. But the Scriptures teach us that all our conduct is to be brought under the influence of religious principle; that all we do is to be done to the glory of God: when, therefore, I saw that the natural tendency of the distinctive principles of Methodism—(the presbyterianism of its ministers, and the consequent authority of its laity)—is to lead men to the violation of one of the first and most important principles of the Gospel, as respects our present condition, namely, a due and reverent submission to the powers that are ordained of God, then I could not but fear that there must be something radically wrong and unscriptural in the system. But observe, my dear friend, that I was also well satisfied that these principles are quite as detrimental to the spiritual prosperity of the Methodists, as they are to the welfare of the state: they cause them to think highly of themselves, however humble may be the phraseology which they occasionally use; they make them, as you know, impatient of reproof, and exceedingly ready to sit in judgment on their preachers, instead of receiving their instructions in that humble and quiet spirit which the Holy Ghost enjoins, respecting the teaching of those who are the ambassadors of Christ, saying, "*Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves, for they watch over your souls as they that must give account.*"—(Heb. xiii. 17.) And yet, such ambassadors they believe their preachers to be. That the evils of this spiritual insubordination should be more visible on the continent of America, than in England, is not surprising, because here the preachers themselves are not an equally well educated set of men, and perhaps yet more especially because they have not, to the same extent, and in some cases not at all, the restraining and guiding influence of our truly venerable and Catholic Church, to the effect of which Methodism in Britain owes so much of its sound piety and respectability.

Mr. Brown—Ah, Mr. Secker, these are hard thrusts, but I believe they are meant in kindness; and deeply do I deplore that there is so much occasion for them. I have long observed, with pain, the tendency there is in us, as Methodists, to spiritual pride—to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think;—(Rom. xii. 3)—which is the more dangerous, because we cloak it under a Methodistic humility of language, which, if we knew ourselves, we should often find is not the real feeling of