

with the nature of it, by way of convincing you, that it is not unworthy of the attention which I am desirous you should pay to it. We consist, then, of about twenty persons, including the ladies, who (living at some distance from any considerable town) meet together once a week, generally at my habitation of New Cottage, not so much for our amusement and reflection as for the improvement of our minds, by reading the best publications of the day that I can procure from my London booksellers, and sometimes an original essay written by one of the company.

I have signified that many of us are of different religious persuasions: this will be seen more distinctly from the following account of our members. Among these I must mention, in the first place, our learned and worthy rector, Dr. Carey. He is, of course, of the church of England; but, like most others of his learned and dignified brethren in these times, he is of that free, and, as it is called, liberal turn of mind, as to explain away the mysteries and a great many of its other articles, which, in my younger days, were considered essential to it. Mr. and Mrs. Topham are Methodists of the Predestinarian and Antinomian class, while Mr. and Mrs. Askew are mitigated Arminian Methodists of Wesley's connexion. Mr. and Mrs. Rankin are honest Quakers. Mr. Baker and his children term themselves *Rational Dissenters*, being of the old Presbyterian lineage, which is now almost universally gone into Socinianism. I, for my part, glory in being a staunch member of our happy establishment, which has kept the golden mean among the contending sects, and which I am fully persuaded approaches nearer to the purity of the apostolic church, than any other which has existed since the age of it. Mrs. Brown professes an equal attachment to the church; yet, being of an inquisitive and ardent mind, she cannot refrain from frequenting the meetings, and even supporting the missions, of those self-created apostles, who are undermining this church on every side, and who are nowhere more active than in our sequestered valley.

With these differences among us, on the most interesting of all subjects, we cannot help having frequent religious controversies; but reason and charity enable us to manage these without any breach of either good manners or good will to each other. Indeed, I believe that we are, one and all, possessed of an unfeigned respect and cordial love for Christians of every description, one only excepted. Must I name it on the present occasion? Yes, I must, in order to fulfill my commission in a proper manner. It is then the church that you