

THE HIGHER CHRISTIAN LIFE.

BY THE REV. B. SHERLOCK.

THE caption of this paper indicates a subject which has always been germane to Methodism. The many denominations which, bearing the name of Methodist, are now filling the world with their liberal evangelism, carry in company with their Arminian Theology, their Itinerancy, and their Class-meeting, the charter and the offer not only of a present and free, but also of a *full* salvation. A look at the history of the movement reveals the origin of this characteristic. When the Holy Spirit entered the heart of Wesley, He took possession of a mind that was as free from religious prejudices as it was from intellectual crookedness; and we may also add, from sensual tendencies. His mind was, we believe, as near to the Christian type as any of that age that could be found; and only needed to be "strangely warmed," as it was in the Aldersgate meeting, to enter upon a career of rapid progress in all that is truly Christian. With few "weights" to lay aside, and almost no special "besetting sin," we see him running the race of consecrated Christian work. And what is the result? Why, that being so entirely devoted, he can plead the promises of Christ—he becomes clothed with the Spirit of Christ, and that Spirit is conveyed by every sermon, is revealed in every hour of active life, and men are moved to prayer and holy living after the pattern drawn in the pages of the New Testament.

Wesley watches the growth of this work of God—at once its rejoicing leader and its calm judicial critic. It needed but a short period of this "hungering and thirsting after righteousness" till many were filled. That filling was the beginning of the "Higher Christian Life" of the period; and the director of the movement is seen collecting the phenomena in the sieve of Scriptural common sense, and by its action there is left those golden grains of truth, which we have in his short but invaluable book, "A Plain Account of Christian Perfection."

From the decisions recorded in that treatise he never varied in any important point, but so constantly insisted on the truth of