

the Methodist preachers also to be His Ministers, when you admit that the same effects are produced by their preaching. And that heaven approves of Methodism is, I think, also evident from its having been made the great means of reviving true piety within the Church itself. I believe it is generally admitted that when the Wesleys, Whitfield, and others, commenced their plain and faithful preaching of the pure Gospel, there was very little of spiritual religion within the Church, either among the clergy or laity. Now, on the contrary, the light of the Church of England is most blessedly shining forth on every hand;—in this change has not Methodism been the chief instrument? But would the Most High have thus honoured it, if it had been schismatical in its origin, and unscriptural in its subsequent procedure?

Mr. Secker.—You have, Mr. Brown, ably stated the most specious argument which can be adduced in favour of Methodism; but yet I think I shall be able to satisfy you that it affords no sufficient justification of the breach which it has made in the unity of the Church, or of its neglect of Episcopal ordination. But before I attempt to do this, permit me distinctly to state that I do not consider that it is at all necessary, in order to establish the truth of any principle, to be able to answer every objection which may be brought against it; for there is perhaps no truth, all the objections to which can be fully met by our finite understanding and limited knowledge; all therefore that is requisite to prove its correctness is, I imagine, to adduce some positive arguments in its favour, the conclusive reasoning of which cannot be overturned. Hence I think that I clearly prove that necessity was laid upon me, and, if upon me, upon every conscientious Methodist and other Dissenter, to return to the Catholic and Primitive Church of England, if I prove—first, that division and schism are positively forbidden by the Word of God; and, secondly, that these evils have most certainly been committed by Methodism and Dissent in general;—these two facts, therefore, I think you are fully satisfied we have established. But if to these evils we find that there is added an entire neglect of the only scriptural method of ministerial ordination, of which also I hope to convince you, then I think I shall have proved the correctness of the principle that *Methodism has so far departed from the right and scriptural path as to make it the duty of its conscientious members to return to the Church of England*, inasmuch as it is primitive in its origin, pure in its doctrine, and apostolic in the orders of its Ministers; and the obligation to do this will, I imagine, be proved, even though I should be unable to answer all those objections which are founded on difficulties arising from our imperfect knowledge of the ways of Him whose wonderful prerogative it is to bring good out of evil. I do not make these remarks, how-

ever, because I think the objections usually brought against the claims of the Church of England to be considered, in Britain, as the one Catholic Church of Christ, one of much force—for, when duly examined, I think they will be found far otherwise.

Mr. Brown.—I admit that there is some force in your statement, that even an unanswered objection cannot overturn those principles which have been already plainly proved by undeniable arguments; still I cannot but *feel* that the success of Methodism is a strong presumptive evidence in its favour, especially as it is a species of reasoning which, as I just observed, the Apostle himself uses.

Mr. Secker.—Ha! my dear friend, I fear that you good Methodists are too ready to be led by impressions which arise from your *feelings*, even when, in your sober judgment, you are far from satisfied with their correctness. I will, however, now endeavour to point out what I consider the weaknesses of the argument founded on the success of Methodism; and I will begin with your last statement, that Methodism was the great agent in the revival of true religion within the Church itself: now in this statement there lies concealed a great fallacy; for what was early Methodism? Was it not almost entirely composed of pious Clergymen and lay members of the Church? Now, that these individuals were, in their degree, highly useful to the Church, I readily admit; but remember, that though they were the founders of what is now a distinct religious sect, *they themselves lived and died in the communion of the Church of England*; it was, therefore, as Churchmen that they became eminent for piety, and, consequently, it was as Churchmen that they were made the instruments of so much good to that Church of which they were the legitimate children: thus, though these individuals were afterwards called Methodists,* it is evident, that, in as far as they aided in bringing about that great revival of religion which took place in the last century, it was, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, the Church which was the means of its own regeneration, as it was her own clergy, and not the ministers of

* It is a singular fact, that so completely to the last did the venerable, though in some instances, I fear, mistaken, Wesley consider himself a Churchman, that he never fairly recognised the name of "Methodist;" and to this day the title of the Wesleyan Hymn Book runs thus,—“for the use of the people called Methodists.”

In proof of the assertion in the text, that even the founders of Methodism were Churchmen, and that therefore, as far as they influenced the Church, it was the influence of Churchmen, let me quote a few words spoken by Mr Wesley, not long before he died, namely, in 1789, suffice to prove:—speaking of those Methodists who were desirous of separating from the Church, he says,—“In flat opposition to these, I declare, once more, that I live and die a member of the Church of England; and that none who regard my judgment or advice will ever separate from it!”