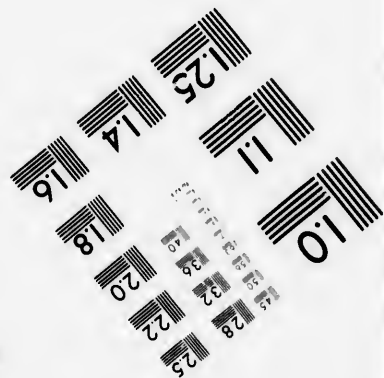
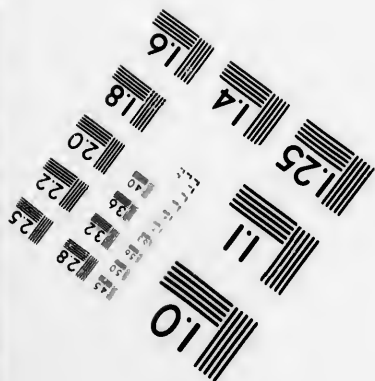
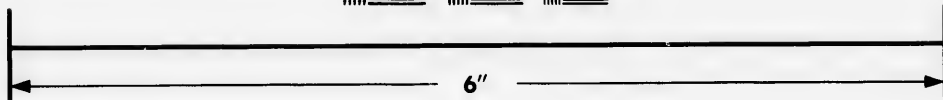
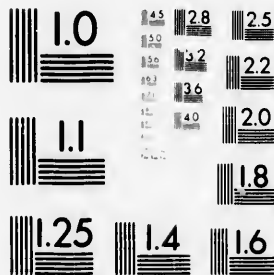


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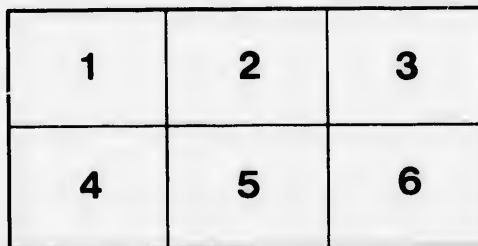
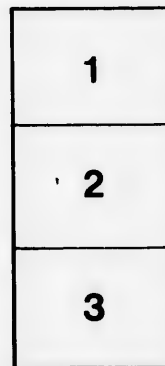
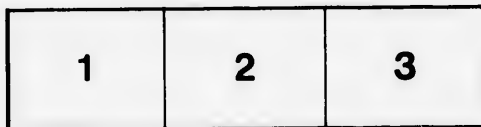
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“WHY I AM A METHODIST,”

A SERIES OF LETTERS IN REPLY TO

CHURCHMAN ALIAS LAYMAN,

BY

JAMES LAWSON, METHODIST MINISTER,
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“ WHY I AM A METHODIST.”

REPLY TO LAYMAN'S LETTERS.

NO. 1.

To the Editor of the Standard.

DEAR SIR,—Just three months ago to-day I wrote you a letter under the heading, “Why I am a Methodist,” pointing out a few of the many inaccurate statements made in a pamphlet by a “Churchman” reviewing a tract entitled as above. I was led to do so by the following reasons: About a year previously a series of fifteen letters appeared in the *Pembroke STANDARD* with the heading, “Why I am a Methodist,” and the signature of “Churchman.” So far as I am aware no one thought it worth while to take any notice of them. After the lapse of some months, however, they were dished up again, a little additional spice being thrown in, and presented to us in pamphlet form. But the “pamphlet” like the letters, seemed to be ignored. Its High Church friends, however, were deterained it should be seen, even if not read, and so, where they could not sell it they presented it, and I found it in many Methodist homes, where it had been placed by the High Church party of the English Church, and sometimes with the modest (?) request that *ten cents* be paid for it! But I never found anyone who had found it sufficiently interesting to read it through. Then, an editorial appeared in the *STANDARD* stating that it did not speak well for the non-episcopal churches that none

of their clergy had answered the pamphlet, besides a little squib from its admirers every now and then. Shortly after, some one, whether friend or foe I know not, sent me a copy, bearing the *Pembroke* postmark. I took it as a sort of challenge to reply to it, either by one who thought I could and wished I would, or, by one who imagined it to be unanswerable. So I concluded to write one letter, to show that the pamphlet could very easily be answered by anyone who saw fit to do so. At once “Churchman” alias “Layman” flew to the rescue of his offspring, but its pretty, smooth features had been sadly disfigured, and the ugly scars still remain.

I referred to the name of his pamphlet, “Methodism versus the Church,” and showed that, according to his view, Methodism does not constitute a church at all, while the Church of England is not only a church but *the only church*. In his reply he denies this claim, and intimates that the Church consists of “Roman, Eastern and Anglican,” and that the English church is only an “integral part of God’s church!” This is poor patching and the thing still has an ugly look about it. He might as well have left it as it was.

Layman in his reply speaks of Methodist having made an “attack” on the church, although in a postscript to

1886

my first letter I had pointed out the fact that it was only a *defence* against an "attack" by an Episcopalian. But of course he has not the manliness to acknowledge this though he cannot deny it.

I referred to Layman's very funny and gratuitous remarks about an "invisible church," the tract having mentioned no such thing. In his "rejoinder" he "advised" me to make a more "elaborate research," &c., and endeavored to make it appear to your readers that those words were actually there. This compelled me to charge him with "wilfully trying to deceive." This he did not relish, but had to swallow. He now acknowledges that those words are not there, (he might better have acknowledged that before), but in doing so he jumbles up words after this fashion, "no such an allusion" as "invisible church"—and by his ready use of quotation marks tries to make it appear I wrote them in that way, but which I certainly did not, as may be seen by referring to my letter. And just here, as Layman does not seem able to grasp the idea of the writer of the tract, I may remark that, while he acknowledges that "unity of faith and spirit is essential to a true church, but denies that there is any "scriptural authority for the Romish dogma, that corporate unity is an essential thing," he certainly does not mean that a true church is therefore invisible. Indeed so far from those words implying that, they cannot be so understood by any intelligent and unbiased reader. By using the words "a true church" the writer shows that he believes there is a true church, *yes*, that there are different true churches, and that *the* true church, i. e. God's universal church, is composed of all those who have this "unity of faith and spirit," even though they belong to different organizations so far as the "visible church" is concerned. It

may not be out of place just here to quote the words of Canon Wilberforce, who recently said that schism is not conscientious separation from any visible church, but separation from "the Holy Catholic Church, or Body of Christ, which is in its essence a spiritual and invisible body, existing wholly independent of its external manifestations and methods, which may be national, geographical, even almost climatic."

Now if Layman found "the subject of an invisible church" in the tract "Why I am a Methodist," what does he find in the foregoing extract from so eminent a clergyman of the church of England? Still, at the risk of exposing Canon Wilberforce to the terrible fate of the tract, which, according to Layman's boastful declaration he "turned inside out," (let pigmy Canon Wilberforce of London tremble before this giant Goliath of Pembroke!), I shall give a few lines more from this honored clergyman's pen, as follows: "The idea that the sin of schism is separation from the visible communion of the Church of England, when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and tested by the word of God, is found wanting, and may without loss, be consigned to the limbo of exploded fallacies."

In my first letter I also showed the absurdity of Layman's assumption in the 5th letter of his series that when the Saviour prayed, "that they all may be one," he was actually praying for "corporate unity," or in other words, that all might belong to the church of England! How does Layman "grapple," as he calls it, with this? Why he doesn't 'grapple,' with it at all; he wisely passes it by in silence. It is too silly to bear repetition. He knows right well that even the church of England is not one, and he has also acknowledged that it is only a "part" of the church, and therefore, according

to him, the Saviour prayed that his people might all belong to the "Roman, Eastern or (High) Anglican Church, as the case might be!!

I also showed that in his 4th letter he had misrepresented the teaching of the Methodist church; that what he was combating might be the teaching of the Plymouth Brethren, but was certainly not the teaching of the Methodists. I said I did not "charge him with trying to deceive," but though he has written three letters since he has not told us whether it was through ignorance, as I charitably assumed, that he made that unjustifiable attack, or whether it was "wilfully and maliciously" done. He passes it by in silence and thereby tacitly acknowledges my criticism correct.

Next, I noticed his unjustifiable remark that Wesley and his follower disagreed in the matter of conversion. I proved from their own words that they did not, and that in order to make it appear that they did Layman had quoted the words of one in regard to conversion and of the other on the Christian life subsequent to conversion. How does he try to extricate himself? Why by leading off your readers to the doctrines of "baptismal regeneration," a "three-fold order of ministers," and "apostolic succession." In my reply I held him to his own words, "*Here we have an instance of the founder and the follower disagreeing.*" Layman felt he was fairly caught and made no further struggles to escape. Now, if this were the only case of Layman's "wilfully trying to deceive," it is such a glaring and despicable one that he ought not to complain of the charge so frequently and so fully proven.

But perhaps I should here remember the words of Mr. Wesley addressed to the Bishop of Exeter in the year 1750. When speaking on the subject of "conversion," he says: "And here great allowances are to be made:

because you are talking of things quite out of your sphere: you are got into an unknown world!" Mr. Wesley then asks the question, "Do you know what *conversion* is?" (Italics his.) And again in another letter to the same bishop he writes,—"*O, sir, spare yourself, if not the Methodists! Do not go so far out of your depth. This is a subject you are as utterly unacquainted with, as with justification or the new birth.*" This is the way in which the Rev. John Wesley wrote to a Church of England bishop, and thus ignores his "baptismal regeneration," in spite of his "confirmation," his "ordination to the priesthood" and his *consecration*, and plainly tells him he knows nothing about "justification or the new birth."

Layman tried to make it appear I slandered and persecuted his church on the subjects of dancing, card-playing, &c. I turned the tables on him, however, and showed that the slander came from his side of the house. I hope he has used in his own behalf the prayer he offered up for me.

As Layman found it convenient to overlook so many points in my former letters, I thought well just to refer to them briefly in this. In doing so I have necessarily referred also to some of his remarks in the first of his present series, but as it contains upwards of four columns I shall have to try and be as brief as I can in noticing the remainder of his letter.

And, first, let me call attention to the very first sentence in that remarkable effusion. Layman says: "It was my intention to reply immediately to Mr. Lawson's last letter, but having been informed that a certain gentleman had decided to criticize the above named pamphlet in a series of letters, I at once made way, not wishing in the least to interfere with his privilege and right." Now if your readers turn to

Layman's letter in the STANDARD of the 11th of May they will find these words: "In conclusion I may state that I have no intention of continuing this discussion at present. My time is too much occupied with other matters." Which of his statements shall we believe?

It then "struck" Layman "as not very complimentary to Mr. L. for 'Presbyter' to step in and take up a matter already begun by a 'Methodist minister.'" He then adds: "However, I fancy the matter was all pre-arranged, and if the Methodists of this county are satisfied with their defenders, I have no cause to complain."

Now perhaps it may give ease to his troubled mind when I inform Layman that his "fancy" has led him altogether astray. It was not pre-arranged. Neither Presbyter nor any one else outside my own family knew anything about my letters till they were in the hands of the printer; nor did Presbyter see either of them till he saw them in print, nor anyone else for that matter, except the printers themselves. And just here I may also correct the false statement made by a clerical member of the firm of Churchman, Layman & Co. to the effect that "Mr. Lawson was assisted by Presbyter in preparing his second letter." Neither Presbyter nor anyone else but myself had any thing to do with its preparation. I am solely responsible for every line, and might, with equal propriety have subscribed myself, as Layman did to the preface to his pamphlet,—*"THE AUTHOR!"* By the way, although Layman in his preface says they were "averse to any clerical hand appearing" yet it *appears* he is not "averse" now to "clerical" help, (and perhaps was not before, so long as it did not *"appear"*), and consequently judges me by himself.

I appreciate the compliment, however, which was thus, though unwit-

tingly, paid both to Presbyter and myself. As was remarked by a person of more than ordinary intelligence and education, it showed that they felt the force of the arguments and facts there stated, and therefore concluded they must have been the product of no ordinary writer, and so gave the credit, in part at least, to Presbyter, whose articles recently published in the STANDARD, prove him to be a man of keen intelligence, extensive information and high literary attainments.

But why was it "not very complimentary" for Presbyter to write those four letters? I am sure there was nothing uncomplimentary so far as I was concerned, as I stated in my first letter that I did not "wish to go into anything like a full review of the pamphlet," intending to write simply that one letter, also adding, "unless it be really necessary and time can be found." Perhaps I should thank Layman for his kind solicitude on my behalf, but I beg to assure him I do not need it, and he had better keep all his sympathy for himself, as the articles in question are far more "complimentary" to me than to him. "Aye, there's the rub." And as a matter of fact I may state, that so far from there being any "pre-arrangement" between us, some of Presbyter's letters were written before my second letter, though I was not then aware of the fact, and one of them actually in the hands of the editor, who thought best, however, on receiving mine, to give it the precedence. Hence Layman's "fancy," like many of his alleged facts, is not to be trusted. As to the "Methodists being satisfied" I may say that complimentary allusion to my letters by the accomplished editor-in-chief of the *Christian Guardian*, Rev. Dr. Dewart, some weeks ago, the fact that the Methodists have published my last letter in tract form for free distribution, and that they intend hav-

ing Presbyterian's four letters published, as they are everywhere spoken of in terms of highest praise, abundantly prove that they are as satisfactory to Methodists as they are unsatisfactory to Layman and other High Church bigots.

Layman complains that "both Mr. L. and 'P.' have lavished a copious supply of abuse and scurrility upon" him, and then piously (?) quotes the words of the great Apostle—"but none of these things move me!" But what has he been 'lavishing' on us? Let the readers of the STANDARD answer. But for Layman's benefit I may say that the point of difference is just here: Layman made most insulting and groundless statements. We said they were so *and proved it*. He made similar charges against us, but *fails to prove them*. Hence his sad wail of discomfiture.

I now come to that part of Layman's letter which he calls "business," and then he so completely begs the question that if I were as free in using quotations as he is I should quote his own words and say, he writes "in a most silly and foolish way!" And just here I am again reminded of a remark by Mr. Wesley in reply to the Bishop of Exeter above referred to, namely, "It is well for you, that *forging quotations* is not felony," for I did not couple those words as he has them." He has simply stated as a fact that the Methodist Society does not constitute a Christian church, but he has sadly failed in giving proof. He has stated that her ministers are "priestly pretenders," but again fails in proof; and now, after having his insulting, abusive and unfounded statements so completely exposed and scattered to the winds by the letters of Presbyterian, so full of clear logic and solid fact, he still has the effrontery to ask me to read his pamphlet again and accept his statements as facts! Not

so, Mr. Layman; that is too much to ask of any intelligent person who has read both; and let me whisper in your ear that you have not yet heard all you will hear as to your own boasted ecclesiastical standing.

Layman tries to prove me incorrect in stating that "Methodism is throughout the Christian world recognized as a branch of the Christian church, by quoting 'statistics,' which a little farther on he seems to disparage, to show that some churches do not so regard it. I did not say they *all* did, but if I had it would have been as accurate as for him to try to make it appear that *none* in those churches he names do so regard it, for even the Church of England is divided on this point. Perhaps it would have been as well if I had said the *Protestant* Christian world, which would then have excused Layman and his section of the "Anglican" church.

With a desperate but ludicrous attempt at sarcasm Layman says: "In his extreme agony of soul he utters a cry of despair for me to apologize for the insult. What insult? For telling the truth?" This is all gratuitous, for my words were as follows: "He is in duty bound, as an honest man, either to prove his statement true or withdraw his unfounded assertion and apologize for the insult." It might cause 'agony of soul' and even a 'cry of despair' if of sufficient importance, for certainly I do not not expect him to do either—the one he is unable and the other unwilling to do.

The remaining part of Layman's letter is taken up with the subject of baptismal regeneration. I shall try, to be very brief in noticing his three columns on this subject, for two reasons; first, because I proved most conclusively in my second letter that Layman did give "garbled extracts of a very misleading character," and also because Presbyterian will answer Layman

on this subject, as well as others treated of in his letters. I shall, however, offer a few remarks.

In your issue of May 11th Layman quotes Wesley as saying: 'By water then, the water of baptism, we are regenerated or born again.' I called this a 'garbled' extract, adding the qualifying phrase, 'if extract at all'—simply because I was not sure whether it was or was not. This stirs up Layman's wrath and he is neither 'courteous and mild'—nor even truthful.

By the way, Layman says I admitted he was 'courteous and mild.' Where? When? He cannot tell. He modestly (?) takes this unction to himself because I said, 'It is all very well to be mild and courteous, but not at the expense of truth,' having in my mind at the time a flattering notice of his pamphlet by one of its admirers, for however much courtesy he may profess or his friends profess for him, his writings show more need of than justification for such a claim.

But to return. Layman says: 'Their source being given, why did he not verify the quotation before making such a base insinuation?' He then adds: 'No; this was too manly a course for our Methodist minister to adopt. So he seeks to convey the impression that the extract is a forgery—*manufactured* to mislead.' Now, Mr. Editor, I wish to ask you and your intelligent and unprejudiced readers, where is there 'courtesy,' 'mildness' or even *truthfulness* in the foregoing fulminations of Layman! Because I did not choose to vouch for the accuracy of his alleged quotation he has no right to assert that I 'sought to convey the impression that it was a forgery.' I did not. He charges me with being 'unmanly' and with making a 'base insinuation;' and still, at the risk of his repeating the charge, I have to say that *he* has been 'un-

manly' and 'base' enough to 'seek to convey the impression' that in his letter to which I was replying, and which contained the quotation above referred to, the 'source' of said quotation was given; *but it is not*, else I would have 'verified' it. Let your readers turn to his letter in the STANDARD of May 11th, and, as Layman says, 'Look and see.' But if they look at it till they are blind they will not find the least indication of the 'source' of that extract. Now what are we to think, Mr. Editor, of one who will make such reckless and unfounded assertions, and by such means endeavour to prove to your readers that I acted a 'base' and 'unmanly' part? Such a man is not to be trusted, and your readers will certainly require him to 'verify' his statements in future before accepting them as the truth.

But though no such hint was given in the former letter Layman does intimate in this one that he was quoting from Wesley's 'Treatise on Baptism.' He then goes on and makes very elaborate quotations from this 'treatise,' which seem to establish his theory; still even in this 'treatise' it is admitted that while baptism is the ordinary means of Salvation 'to which God hath tied us,' yet 'he may not have tied himself.' Indeed it is acknowledged that 'where baptism cannot be had the case is different,' i.e., the person may be regenerated without baptism.

But it matters little what this treatise teaches or does not teach. In the first place it was written, not by John Wesley, but by his father, who was a rigid high church clergyman. In 1756, the date properly quoted by Layman, John Wesley did republish this treatise, and adopt it as his own—thus showing his veneration for his father and strong attachment to his mother church.

In Mr. Wesley's defence against an attack by Dr. Erskine in 1766, he complains of being held responsible for *everything* contained in certain tracts he had published, written by other men. He instances a charge made against him of having published John Goodwin's Treatise on Justification, and replies as follows: 'I have so; but I have not undertaken to defend every expression which occurs therein. Therefore none has a right to palm them upon the world *as mine*.'

But this treatise on baptism is not to be found among Mr. Wesley's standard doctrinal writings and never was, consequently it has no claim whatever upon our acceptance as the teaching of Wesley. If he believed in its High Church teaching during the latter part of his life why did he not retain it? The fact that he left it out and put nothing like it in its place most conclusively proves that his views were very greatly modified on this subject. Another evidence of this fact is, that most of his preachers denied the dogma of baptismal regeneration and he never rebuked them for it, which he certainly would have done in no uncertain manner if he had considered them at variance with the Scriptures. But further; when he abridged the thirty-nine articles of the English church and reduced them to twenty-five, to form a doctrinal basis for the Methodist church in the United States, he eliminated from the article on baptism all that would teach this absurd and unscriptural doctrine. The article as amended by Wesley reads: 'Baptism is not only a sign of profession, and mark of difference, whereby Christians are distinguished from others that are not baptized, but it is also a sign of regeneration, or the new birth. The baptism of young children is to be retained in the church.' Now this is the whole article on baptism as given by Wesley in the year 1784, and

is all that he has given as direct, official teaching on this subject. Incidentally, however, he does mention the subject just twice in his sermons, and, as I clearly showed in my letter of April 29th, published in the STANDARD of May 4th, he there refers to it for the very purpose of showing that *'they* (baptism and the new birth) *do not constantly go together*.' And as these are the only two sermons in which it is referred to, why should Layman find fault with Presbyterian and me for alluding to them, especially as he set us the example!

In my quotation from Wesley's sermon as it stands in my letter the word 'always' is omitted, as pointed out by Layman; this, however, was no doubt an oversight of the compositor. At any rate it was not intentional; I copied it, as I believed and still believe, word for word, stating at the time it was from Wesley's sermons I was quoting, so that it could be 'verified.' It is quite evident there was no attempt at deception, because in the latter part of the very same sentence it reads, 'they do not constantly go together.' Now what is the difference between the word 'always' omitted and 'constantly' inserted? But while Layman is correct in saying the word 'always' is omitted, he is not correct in saying it 'increases somewhat the force of the last member of the sentence,' for 'the' last member of the sentence' was correctly printed as follows: *they do not constantly go together*.'

Layman asks, 'Does not this language teach that the new birth does frequently accompany baptism?' I answer, no. This language merely teaches that there were some who thought it *always did*, just as Layman no doubt believes, and this Mr. Wesley emphatically denies. The words certainly imply that baptism and the new birth may go together, but there

is nothing to indicate whether they more '*frequently*' go together or more '*frequently*' *do not* go together. Nor does it make a particle of difference; for if '*they do not constantly* go together,' then 'the theory is exploded, and all of Layman's three columns of quotations cannot put it together again.

But as this letter is already longer than I intended, I will reserve further discussion of the subject for next issue.

Yours sincerely,
JAMES LAWSON.

Methodist parsonage, Cobden,
July 15, 1886.



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SON.

“WHY I AM A METHODIST.”

REPLY TO LAYMAN'S LETTERS.

NO. 2.

To the Editor of the Standard.

Before dismissing the subject of baptismal regeneration I will add a few more remarks on Wesley's teaching concerning it. First, in regard to infants. Mr. Wesley says: 'Our church supposes that all who are baptized in infancy are at the same time born again; and it is allowed that the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition.'

Now as this is the only sentence in all Mr. Wesley's standard doctrinal sermons that seems in the least to teach the superstitious doctrine of baptismal regeneration, there is no wonder that Layman grasps it with a desperate clutch, italicising some words, putting in some extra commas and entirely changing one very important word. I refer to the word 'supposition' which he has changed to *assumption*; perhaps because he considers it a much stronger word, for he evidently thinks the word "supposition" a very weak one, as may be seen by the use he makes of it in his letter "No. 2." He there uses the word three times, and every time he puts it in italics in order to draw attention to it and show how weak a word it is, and not content with that, in two places out of the three he adds the explanatory words (for the sake of his thick-headed readers)—"not proof!"

Now, if "supposition" is not "proof," as Layman himself asserts when it suits his purpose, how does this same Layman come to say in the very next line after the quotation from Wesley in which he uses both "supposes" and "supposition"—"This language undeniably proves that Wesley held that the new birth is conveyed to infants *in baptism!*" In one letter he repeatedly asserts that "supposition" is "not proof," and in the other he dogmatically affirms that it "*undeniably proves!*" Some men are said to be well worth watching; what about the writings of Layman?

But now, having proven that according to Layman's own definition of the word "supposition" the language of Wesley correctly quoted does not prove that he held the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, I shall offer a few remarks under the "assumption" that "supposition" does "undeniably prove." Now what would it prove? Why that John Wesley believed just what Presbyter and I, and every Methodist minister most cordially believe, namely, that "when an infant is baptized it is at the same time born again;" nay more, that so far as it is possible for a child to be regenerated or born of the Spirit, that the day before its baptism it was even then born again, and, as Mr. Wesley very properly remarks, "it is allowed that

the whole office for the baptism of infants proceeds upon this supposition." Else we would not baptize them. We baptize an adult person who has not previously been baptized on a profession of his faith in Christ, believing he has been already regenerated or born again. We do not believe the water baptism regenerates him; we regard it merely as the "outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace." The very words imply that there should first be the inward and spiritual grace before there is the outward sign of it. Surely there must be the existence of the thing itself, before the "sign" signifying its existence. As the "inward grace" is "invisible" we have to rely on the profession of the responsible subject, but in the case of an infant we make use of the "sign" with the utmost assurance of the "inward grace," believing as we do from Scripture in the universality of Christ's atonement, and bearing in mind the precious words of Jesus in regard to "little children," that "of such is the Kingdom of God." But we believe those words of Christ refer to each and every infant, baptized or unbaptized, otherwise He would most assuredly have made a distinction. Where God has not put any we will not dare to do it; nor have we any desire to do so, for as "it is not the will of our Father in heaven that one of these little ones should perish," we rejoice in the confidence that no human—nor inhuman invention can overrule *His will*.

But as Layman has so much to say about Mr. Wesley let us look at his writings again. In the sermon on the New Birth, already referred to, he says: "The expression, 'being born again,' was not first used by our Lord in his conversation with Nicodemus; it was well known before that time, and was in common use among the Jews when our Saviour appeared among

them. When an adult heathen was convinced that the Jewish religion was of God, and desired to join therein, it was the custom to baptize him first, before he was admitted to circumcision. And when he was baptized he was said to be born again; by which they meant, that he who was before a child of the devil was now adopted into the family of God, and accounted one of his children. This expression, therefore, which Nicodemus, being a 'Teacher in Israel,' ought to have understood well, our Lord uses in conversing with him; only in a stronger sense than he was accustomed to." Farther on in the same sermon occurs the language already quoted over and over again, clearly stating that "baptism is not the new birth; they are not one and the same thing." And also, "that as the new birth is not the same thing with baptism, so it does not always accompany baptism; they do not constantly go together." Could anything be more conclusive?

But as Layman does not seem to like our quoting from this "chosen authority," the New Birth sermon, I will quote one complete paragraph from a letter written by Mr. Wesley to a Rev. Mr. Potter, Church of England clergyman, in the year 1758. He says: "You proceed: 'Our holy church doth teach us, that, by the laver of regeneration in baptism, we are received into the number of the children of God—this is the first part of the new birth.' What is the first part of the new birth? *Baptism*? It is the *outward sign* of that inward and Spiritual grace; but no *part* of it at all. It is impossible it should be. The outward sign is no more a part of the inward grace than the body is a part of the soul. Or do you mean, that *regeneration* is a part of the new birth? Nay, this is the *whole* of it. Or is it the *laver of regeneration* which

is the first part of it? That cannot be; for you suppose this to be the same with baptism."

I have given the whole paragraph to show that I have not omitted anything relating to the subject, for that paragraph contains all there is on baptism in the whole article. I wish now, however, to draw special attention to the fact that Wesley here states, and this as early as 1758, thirty-three years before his death, that '*baptism is not the first part of the new birth, and that it is no part of it at all!*'

Now is it not perfectly clear from all this, that Mr. Wesley held the very same views that we now hold and preach? By saying that baptism is not the first part of the new birth, as was believed by the clergyman to whom he wrote, it is clear he believed there might be the new birth without baptism, as in the case of all infants, and by saying, "it forms no part of the new birth at all" he clearly shows that one has not necessarily anything to do with the other. This fully accords with what he says in reference to Nicodemus already quoted, that our Saviour used a term with which he was already familiar, "only in a stronger sense than he was accustomed to." Hitherto Nicodemus had understood the new birth to refer to water baptism only. And having either received this in infancy according to the belief of some, being born a Jew, or, because, being born a Jew, he had no need of baptism according to others, he did not consider himself in need of that great change which the Saviour presses home upon him. The Saviour's words evidently imply this: 'It is not enough that you have enjoyed all the outward rites and ceremonies of the Jewish Church. You may have been *born again* so far as the rites of the church are concerned, but there is a greater change still that you need. It is not enough that a man be born

of water; he must also be born of the Spirit." Thus did our Saviour show to the Jews that *their* new birth was not sufficient; that there might be what they called being "*born again,*" which was by water, and still be wanting the real new birth, wrought only by the Spirit of God.

In his notes on John 3:3 Mr. Wesley declares that in our Lord's discourse with Nicodemus he 'shows that no external profession, *no ceremonial ordinances,* no privileges of birth, could entitle any to the blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom; that an entire change of heart and life, was necessary for that purpose; that this could be wrought in man only by the power of God.' But Layman calls special attention to Mr. Wesley on John 3:5. Well, let us look at his words. The following are his 'notes' in full on that verse: 'Except he experiences that great inward change by the Spirit, and be baptised (wherever baptism can be had) as the outward sign and means of it.'

Now, what is there in this contrary to the teaching of Methodists at the present day? Wesley here teaches that the 'great inward change' is wrought 'by the Spirit; and not by baptism, for he *adds,* 'and be baptised (wherever baptism can be had) as the outward sign and means of it,' thus clearly showing that one takes place without the other. The *necessary* change is that wrought by the Spirit; as an outward sign or means baptism should be had if possible, showing that the former does not depend on the latter. Also in his notes on Titus 3:5, to which Layman vainly refers, Mr. Wesley says: 'Here the apostle gives a delightful view of our redemption. 1. The cause of it—not our *works of righteousness,* but the *kindness and love* of God our Saviour. 2. The effects, which are, (1) Justification—*being justified,* pardoned, and accepted,

through the merits of Christ only—not from any desert in us, but *according to his own mercy, by his grace, his free unmerited goodness.* (2) Sanctification, expressed by *the laver of regeneration* [that is, baptism, the thing signified, as the outward sign] *and the renewing of the Holy Ghost*, which purifies the soul as water cleanses the body, and renews it in the image of God. (3) The consummation of all—that *we might become heirs of eternal life*, and live now in the joyful hope of it.'

I have given the notes in full here also, that the reader may have the full benefit of Mr. Wesley's comments on the passages referred to by Layman. (The italics are Mr. Wesley's.) But what do they prove in reference to the Popish doctrine of baptismal regeneration? Simply nothing whatever to uphold it. Here, as in his notes on John 3:5, Mr. Wesley shows that it is not the water, but the Spirit that renews the heart. In the one place he says, 'no ceremonial ordinances can entitle any to the blessings of the Messiah's Kingdom,' and then affirms that 'an entire change of heart and life is necessary,' and that this can be 'wrought in man only by the power of God.' In the other place he speaks of 'the renewal of the Holy Ghost, which purifies the soul as water cleanses the body.' Now that is just what the Methodist ministers believe and teach, namely, that the Holy Ghost renews and purifies the soul as water cleanses the body. But believing that the Holy Spirit cleanses the soul *in like manner* as water cleanses the body is very different from believing that they both necessarily take place at the very same time. In the eighth verse of that same third chapter of John the Saviour compares the operations of the Holy Spirit in the new birth or work of regeneration to the blowing of the wind, but the

resemblance is in reference to *manner* and not *time*.

A word more on the passage in Titus. Wesley does not mention the word baptism at all in the whole chapter, the explanatory phrase in which it occurs being added by a later hand as may be seen by its being enclosed in brackets. This is explained on the title page. But if he had it would have proven nothing in support of baptismal regeneration, as already shown. Layman also has undertaken to explain Mr. Wesley by the use of brackets or parenthesis marks, informing us that one of the effects of justification is justification! As may be seen above, Mr. Wesley gave justification as one of the effects of *redemption*.

Layman also quotes Mr. Wesley on Acts 22:16 and Romans 6:3; but, as in the other passages, his theory instead of being strengthened is weakened by what is quoted. By the use of the word 'ordinarily' Mr. Wesley clearly shows as he also does elsewhere, that conversion and baptism did not always go together; and that they did 'ordinarily' refer only to the 'primitive church,' as Mr. Wesley is careful to state. By his use of the words 'real penitents' and 'faith,' he also shows that he is here referring not to infants but to adults, and that such can only be saved by becoming 'real penitents' and exercising faith in the Lord Jesus Christ—which is 'real' good Methodist doctrine. We, as Methodists, do not by any means ignore the sacrament of baptism. Let this be distinctly understood. It is only its abuse, or the laying of too much stress upon it and too little on repentance, faith and good works, that we deplore. Methodists believe with the apostle Peter that baptism is 'not the putting away of the filth of the flesh.' Layman tells us of Mr. Wesley baptising 'a gentilewoman,' and

of the 'peace she immediately found' being a 'fresh proof that the outward sign, duly received, is always accompanied with the inward grace.' Also of 'two young women; one of whom found a deep sense of the presence of God in His ordinance; the other received a full assurance of His pardoning love, and was filled with joy unspeakable.' Well, and what about it? Mr. Wesley also tells of attending the sacrament (of the Lord's supper) on the 18th of May, 1755, and many found an uncommon blessing, and felt God has not yet left the church.' At other times he speaks of blessings being received by fasting and prayer, and the faithful performance of other Christian duties. Methodists cordially believe it all. We believe the blessing of God attends the proper observance of both of the sacraments and of each and all the means of grace. So did John Wesley. But we do not believe the new birth is affected by any rite or ceremony or that it always necessarily accompanies its administration. Neither did John Wesley, and the very fact that he quotes those instances shows that he was painfully aware that in many cases baptism was administered and received in such a way that no blessing accompanied it; and certain it is that he records the conversion of scores, yea hundreds if not thousands though the preaching of the word, being accompanied by the Spirit of God, producing true repentance and faith, without a word being said or hinted about water baptism. John Wesley preached sermons on 'Salvation by faith,' but never on 'Salvation by Baptism!'

I have thus shown that Wesley did not teach baptismal regeneration as Layman would fain make your readers believe he did. Mr. Wesley taught 'Salvation by Faith,' preceded by repentance for sin. His own words which I have quoted declare that 'baptism is not the first part of the new birth,' and that it is no part of it at all. Also that 'they do not constantly go together,' and therefore there may be one without the other. This is not Layman's doctrine, but it is the doctrine of the Book, and therefore of John Wesley and the Methodist church.

I intended being more brief than I have in my discussion of this subject; still I have necessarily omitted much that might be said. I am now willing, however, to leave the matter with your intelligent and unprejudiced readers, notwithstanding all the self-laudation of Layman and his crowing over Presbyter and me. He tells your readers he has put us in a 'dilemma,' and with beautiful simplicity and cruel kindness offers us our 'choice of horns.' But as we are not accustomed to 'horns' we decline with thanks. No, Mr. Layman, we shall not 'take our choice of horns.' We have no use for them and are not driven to them by necessity. We have a more pleasant alternative. I have proved my statements true and many of yours false, and I can safely predict that Presbyter will do the same,

Yours sincerely,

JAMES LAWSON.

Methodist parsonage, Cobden,

“ WHY I AM A METHODIST.”

REPLY TO LAYMAN'S LETTERS.

NO. 3.

To the Editor of the Standard.

DEAR SIR,—The second letter of Layman in reply to mine published in your issue of May 4th, occupies nearly a whole page, upwards of five columns being taken up with a discussion of the apostolic succession theory. Layman's feelings must be very tender on this subject, judging from the way in which he writhes under the few gentle raps I gave him. Nevertheless, he must submit to a few more. I shall endeavour, however, to condense my reply as much as possible in order to make way for 'Presbyter,' whom your readers will be anxious to hear, and whose province it is, more than mine, to answer Layman on this particular question. The able manner in which Presbyter has already treated this subject is a sufficient guarantee that he will find it no difficult task to maintain his solid position and expose the sophistry of Layman.

As, however, these letters of mine, like my former reply to Layman, are to be published in tract form for distribution, and will of course fall into the hands of many who will not be fortunate enough to see those of Presbyter, I shall take the opportunity of noticing briefly the remarks of Layman on this subject.

In beginning his letter, Layman tells your readers that in his 'reply to Mr. L.," he "culled a couple of extracts

from the pamphlet. They were these: 'We believe that the three-fold order of ministers is not only authorized by its apostolical institution, but also by the written word.' Again: 'We believe it would not be right for us to administer either baptism or the Lord's Supper, unless we had a commission to do so from those bishops whom we apprehend to be in a succession from the apostles.'"

Now, in the first place, let me ask Layman *why* he 'culled' those extracts in his 'reply to Mr. L.?' That was not *replying* at all, for they had nothing whatever to do with the matter in question, which was 'conversion.' Layman had endeavored to make it appear that 'Wesley and his follower,' meaning by 'follower' the writer of the tract, 'Why I am a Methodist,' disagreed on that subject. I clearly and unanswerably proved that they did not, and so Layman was driven to the expedient of 'culling' from his pamphlet 'a couple of extracts' which had no bearing whatever on the subject, to see if he could blind your readers and draw me off from the point at issue to something else. But as I have had occasion before to point out to your readers this trick of Layman I will say nothing more about it now.

'My critic' then quotes (almost correctly) my question as follows: 'Does

not Layman know perfectly well that Mr. Wesley wrote those words in the year 1745, shortly after his conversion, and while he was a strict and, to some extent, bigoted churchman?' He then replies with apparent injured innocence, 'Of course I *know* that fact and accordingly prefixed the date (1745) to the quotation in the pamphlet. Look and see. But my critic seeks to convey the impression that I did not do so.'

Now let us see who it is that 'seeks to convey' a false 'impression' which crime Layman thus gratuitously charges upon his 'critic.' In my letter of May 4th I was answering his letter of April 27th in which those 'culled extracts' were found, and certainly there was no date 'prefixed' there. My letter was addressed to the editor of the STANDARD, as this is, and Layman should know that a very small proportion of the readers of the STANDARD can 'verify' his assertions by referring to the pamphlet. If he recognized the fact that it was important to 'prefix the date' in his pamphlet, why did he omit it in his letter to the STANDARD? Was it not to 'convey a false impression?' Let your intelligent readers decide.

But even had the date been given in his letter, comparatively few would have known that that was 'shortly after his (Wesley's) conversion, and while he was a strict and, to some extent, bigoted churchman.' Layman took good care to keep those facts in the dark, and endeavored to make it appear that those words quoted from Wesley gave a true idea of his teachings during the principal part of his ministerial life. My explanation, showing that they were written before he broke loose from the fetters of High churchism, gives quite a difference colouring to those words. And Layman knows I am correct. However, he says, 'they are absolutely true, neither manufactured

nor yet separated from the conditions which surround them when written.' Once more I am reminded of Mr. Wesley's remark to the Episcopalian bishop, 'It is well for you that forging quotations is not felony,' for I never used the words, 'separated from the conditions which surrounded them ('surround' being probably a typographical error) when written,' though Layman encloses that phrase in quotation marks as though I had. But perhaps Presbyter used some such language, and so that is quite accurate enough for Layman. Indeed in the third column of letter No. I, he positively states in reference to Presbyter and me, 'Both these men professed to 'interpret' their quotations 'in the light of their surroundings.' He had no right whatever to use the word 'both' in the foregoing quotation, but as I perfectly agree with Presbyter in this as in all that he has written, so far as I remember, I shall not hold Layman accountable for anything in this incorrect statement more than his usual recklessness and want of accuracy.

But, date or no date, why did Layman introduce those quotations, even if they had been at all relevant to the subject, which I have already shown they were not? Evidently he did so to prove that Wesley believed in the theory of apostolical succession, which doctrine, or more properly "fable," as Wesley calls it, I have already clearly shown from Wesley's own writings he repudiated the very next year, yes, the very next month, and continued to do so during the whole of his after life—a period of nearly half a century. Consequently I repeat, it was done "on purpose to deceive." While allowing that "the year 1745 may be an 'early period of Wesley's ministry,' Layman adds as an offset, 'but he was 42 years old, and had been *twenty* years in the 'min-

istry." Let me remind him that many a man besides Wesley has lived to be 42 years old before he has been led to renounce the errors taught him in his younger days. Considering the "vehement prejudice of his education," of which he speaks, and all his "surroundings," the wonder is that he renounced them when he did. As to his having been "twenty years in the ministry" let me also remind Layman of the *kind* of a "ministry" it was. Listen to Wesley's own words in his "Appeal to men of Reason and Religion," in which he says: "It was just at the time when we wanted little of filling up the measure of our iniquities, that two or three clergymen of the Church of England began vehemently to call sinners to repentance."

Bishop Burnett's account of the clergy is as follows: "Our ember-weeks are the burden and grief of my life. The much greater part of those who come to be ordained are ignorant to a degree not to be apprehended by those who are not obliged to know it. The easiest part of knowledge is that to which they are the greatest strangers. Those who have read some few books yet never seem to have read the Scriptures. Many cannot give a tolerable account even of the Catechism itself, how short and plain soever. This does often tear my heart."

Southey says: "The clergy had lost that authority which may always command at least the appearance of respect; and they had lost that respect also by which the place of authority may sometimes so much more worthily be supplied. In the great majority of the clergy zeal was wanting. The excellent Leighton spoke of the church as a fair carcass without a spirit."

I could copy pages of such descriptions of the clergy of the Church of England at the time Wesley appeared, if it were necessary. Let it be borne in mind, then, that although

Wesley had been twenty years in the ministry—such as it was—he had been only seven years a Christian, that is, a true believer in Christ, according to his own testimony, his conversion having taken place on the 24th of May, 1738.

But as I must not occupy too much space in noticing this first paragraph of Layman's letter I now proceed to the next. And here I am again compelled to charge him with "wilfully trying to deceive," as I shall soon show. He begins by saying, "Mr. L. makes a desperate effort to prove," etc. There was no "desperate effort" about it. I simply related facts and correctly quoted Wesley's own works on the subject, which no man can truthfully deny. But Layman says: "I ask the reader's special attention to a somewhat fuller examination of this matter than 'one brief sitting' has evidently permitted Mr. L. to make."

Now I wish to call "the reader's special attention" to the fact that Layman wrote the foregoing sentence "on purpose to deceive." There is no "evidence" to show that my "examination of this matter" was all made at "one brief sitting." As a matter of fact it is not true. I have been making an "examination of this matter" more or less for years, and have read Mr. Wesley's testimony on the subject many times as written by himself and quoted by others. That "one brief sitting" referred merely to the writing of my first letter, as was there distinctly stated, and nothing but the most consummate stupidity or "wilful" attempt "to deceive" could cause Layman to misuse those words as he does. As it was a fact I had a perfect right to state it; and I may now add that my second letter, written on the 29th of April in reply to his published in the STANDARD of April 27th, cost me very little more time or study than the former one, having written it the very

first opportunity after seeing his, and the very same day having attended to a lot of private correspondence, corrected and returned "proof" of my tract on "Christ's First Miracle," in reply to the sermon by Rev. G. J. Low, High Church clergyman of Brockville, and also led prayer-meeting, choir rehearsal, etc., in the evening. I had no intention of making these statements, but as Layman was just *two months* replying and has so much to say about my letter being written at "one brief sitting" I have taken the liberty of making the foregoing explanations. In so doing I take no special credit to myself, as the facts stated in those letters are quite familiar to anyone who is at all conversant with the history of the Methodist Church.

But having disposed of Layman's unjustifiable sneer, let us look at his 'somewhat fuller examination of this matter.' He quotes Wesley as follows: 'I set out for Bristol. On the road I read over Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church. In spite of the vehement prejudice of my education, I was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught; but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order; and that originally every Christian congregation was a church independent of all others.' This is the whole of Wesley's entry in his journal for Monday, January 20th, 1746. I see on comparing it with Layman that he has omitted a little at the end. In his comments on this, Layman says: 'Here Wesley admits that *'if'* this book were correct then bishops and presbyters were the same order.' Now why does he emphasize the word *'if'*? Evidently to weaken Mr. Wesley's statement; but assuming that he is candid in this, then we must conclude he is wholly unacquainted with the logical method of reasoning made use of in Geometry

and similar subjects, for *if* he were he would know that every proposition in Euclid is demonstrated by the use of just such language as Wesley here employs. First he states the fact that 'in spite of the vehement prejudice of his education he was ready to believe that this was a fair and impartial draught'; then, as a necessary sequence he says, 'but if so, it would follow that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) of one order.' Whilst, therefore, to the illogical mind of Layman the conclusion appears somewhat doubtful, it was perfectly clear to the logical mind of Wesley, and, as was his habit, he sets down his premises and conclusion with logical conciseness, clearness and conclusiveness. And in this, as in many other respects, he showed himself to be a true apostolic successor to St. Paul, who, in his Epistle to the Romans, viii. 16, 17, reasons thus: 'The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God; and if children, then heirs.'

Now will Layman say that when St. Paul used the word 'if' in this passage he thereby weakened its force? Did he doubt that he was a 'child of God'? Was it not this very fact that he was here asserting with the utmost assurance? Certainly it was, and having thus clearly established the fact of sonship he then argues with the strongest possible logical conclusiveness, '*And if children, then heirs.*' Layman should not accuse others of making 'desperate efforts'; he has here made a 'desperate effort' himself, and, to use the word in its wider signification, he has made a *desperate* failure too.

He then speaks sneeringly of Wesley having read this book '*on the road,*' italicizing the words as I have just done. Let me remind him that the road was not only a long one and the mode of travelling far less expeditious

than now, but that Mr. Wesley did a very great deal of his extensive reading 'on the road,' as when not so occupied he was usually either preaching or writing or engaged in some other active labour. In this way it was that he accomplished so much more than almost any other man since the days of the Apostles both as a reader and writer, and also as a preacher of the gospel. But what does it matter where or how the book was read? The point in dispute is, whether Wesley did or did not believe that 'bishops and presbyters were the same order.' That point I have clearly settled in the affirmative by his own positive declaration. Layman foolishly says: 'he does not then speak of being convinced by it,' for what difference does it make whether he 'then' speaks of being 'convinced' or not, when we have his own testimony to the fact, written nearly forty years after, where he says: 'Lord King's Account of the Primitive Church convinced me many years ago that bishops and presbyters are the same order.' Thus we see not only from Wesley's words at the time, but many years afterwards, that he certainly was 'convinced' at the time of reading that book, and that he *stayed convinced too*. Surely no reasonable man would require anything more *convincing*.

Layman's third paragraph now demands a brief notice. He speaks of 'a few expressions of Wesley' which he says I have 'suppressed.' He might as well have 'suppressed' them, too, for all the good they do him. I no more 'suppressed' them than I did everything else that Wesley wrote on the subject. I could not put everything in one letter. But I am perfectly sure, Mr. Editor, that none of your intelligent readers will come to the conclusions of Layman from those 'few expressions of Wesley' which he 'cites.' He concludes (1) that presbyters have no right to ordain or to appoint, simply

because Wesley said on one occasion: 'It is not clear to us, that presbyters, so circumstanced as we are, may appoint or ordain others.' Layman improperly emphasizes *presbyters*. Why did he not emphasize the modifying phrase '*circumstanced as we are?*' That very 'expression' proves that Wesley believed that presbyters had a right to ordain, though he was not 'clear' that it would be right just then for them being 'circumstanced' as they were. I do not wish to lengthen my letters unduly, though it might not be amiss to refer to the fact that at the conference held this year (1755) the main question discussed was, whether they ought to separate from the establishment, in reference to which Wesley says: 'Whatever was advanced on the one side or the other was seriously and calmly considered, and on the third day we were all fully agreed in that general conclusion that (whether it was lawful or not) it was no ways expedient.' It was the 'expediency' and not the 'lawfulness' of it that actuated Wesley, and he even goes so far as to say in reference to those who opposed his view that he 'admired their spirit and was ashamed of his own.' He acknowledged that though he 'did not fluctuate, yet he could not answer the arguments' on their side of the question. And considering the 'vehement prejudice of his education' we can scarcely wonder at the tenacity with which he clung so long to the rules of the Church of England. Notwithstanding, the time came, as I have already shown and may find occasion to show again, when Wesley was quite 'clear' that the Methodists were 'so circumstanced' that it was not only lawful but expedient for him as a 'presbyter' to exercise his right to 'ordain'—*which he accordingly did*. Does Layman require any stronger proof than this of Wesley's belief in the right of presbyters to ordain?

We have both his word and acts ; what could we have more ?

As to Layman's conclusion (2) that according to his (Wesley's) judgment, the Episcopal form of church government was scriptural and apostolical, it will be sufficient to add Wesley's own comment, namely, 'I mean, well agreeing with the practice and writings of the Apostles. *But that it is prescribed in Scripture, I do not believe.* This opinion, which I once zealously espoused I have been heartily ashamed of ever since I read Stillingfleet's *Irenicon.*' Layman's conclusion (3) that the ecclesiastical order in England was not only lawful, but highly commendable, (he having omitted Wesley's modifying words, 'in general') has been

so well answered by Wesley's explanation of '(2)' that nothing more need be added to it. No one denies that Wesley believed Episcopacy to be a scriptural form of church government, but by his avowal that he did not believe it was 'prescribed in Scripture' he proved he did not believe it to be the only Scriptural form. Thus Layman gains nothing, but on the contrary, loses by all that long paragraph of his criticism. But my letter grows long, and having still upwards of four columns to review, I shall have to ask the indulgence of both editor and reader for one letter more.

Yours sincerely,

JAMES LAWSON.

Methodist parsonage, Cobden.



"WHY I AM A METHODIST."

REPLY TO LAYMAN'S LETTERS.

NO. 4.

To the Editor of the Standard.

DEAR SIR,—I now come to the fourth paragraph of Layman's 'Farewell,' letter to me, in which he tells your readers, in reference to Presbyter and me, that he has a 'bit of evidence which will add to their discomfit and leave them without an inch of ground to stand on so far as the Lord King matter is concerned.' Not so, friend Layman; better wait till you are sure our 'discomfit' has been accomplished, before you so confidently speak of 'adding' to it. But what is that 'bit of evidence' which Layman has discovered and now so cruelly hurls at Presbyter and me? Why this: 'While I admit that Wesley wrote in 1784, 'Lord King's account of the Primitive church convinced me many years ago, that bishops and presbyters are the same order, and consequently have the same right to ordain,' as quoted by Mr. L.; and again: 'I firmly believe I am a Scriptural bishop as much as any man in England or Europe,' as quoted by Mr. L. and P.; yet, in June 1789 nearly five years subsequently, Wesley tells us how he came to thus express himself. He says: When I said, 'I believe I am a Scriptural bishop, I spoke on Lord King's *supposition*, that bishops and presbyters are (essentially) one order.'

This, Mr. Editor, is the 'bit of evidence' which Layman prophesied

would be so 'discomfiting!' Well, so it is, but unfortunately for him it is he who is discomfited, for, so far from renouncing his previously expressed views, Wesley in these words *reiterates* his former expressed opinion, *with the grounds for holding it*. He considered himself a bishop, not because he had been *consecrated* to that office but because bishops and presbyters are one order, and he being a presbyter, was therefore also a bishop. Wesley here used the word 'supposition' in the place of *assumption, ground, hypothesis or principle*. That is, he explains on what *grounds* he declared himself a bishop; it was on the *assumption* that 'bishops and presbyters are one order'; and this conclusion he arrived at by reading King's book. Thus does Wesley defend his position and justifies his former statement. But Layman says: 'Thus then does Wesley with his own hand sweep away all the sophistry of my two critics about King's book having convinced him.' I will show the reader where the sophistry belongs. In his former letter Layman quotes Wesley's words on baptism in which he makes use of the very same expression, namely 'supposition,' adding, 'This language undeniably proves,' but now, simply because it suits him to do so, he flatly contradicts his own words and declares that *supposition* is 'not proof!' Perhaps if he had a better

memory he would be more consistent in his statements.

But so far as my argument is concerned it matters nothing whether supposition is proof or not. It is *opinions* we are discussing, and we have the most undeniable proof that Wesley's opinion in 1746 was that 'bishops and presbyters are the same order.' We have undeniable proof that in 1784 his opinions on the subject had not changed, as Layman himself is compelled to admit. And we have also undeniable proof that in the year 1789--the year in which Layman says 'he really makes what is an apology' for having expressed that opinion (!)—he still firmly held that opinion, *for in that very year Wesley ordained Henry Moore and Thomas Rankin.* It is said that actions speak louder than words. I have shown by Wesley's words that his opinion on this subject remained unchanged, and now I have proven it by his actions too.

Layman says: 'Thus does Wesley sweep away with his own hand all the sophistry of my two critics,' &c. I reply, 'Thus does Wesley sweep away with his own hands—in the act of ordaining those two men by the imposition of hands—all the sophistry, or more properly nonsense of my critic' Layman.

His next paragraph requires no more answer than what has already been given. Supposing it to be true that Lord King was enticed over to the Church of England in after life and even repudiated his own book, as Layman states, it matters not at all to us. Whatever he may have done, we have already seen that John Wesley remained steadfast unto the end. No offers of preferment tempted him astray. Many a good man has gone astray, yet his good works remained, and whatever Lord King may have done subsequently, his book still stands firm, because founded on the word of

God. Let no one imagine that John Wesley built his faith on Lord King. By no means. But his book, so clear in its enunciation of New Testament truth, led Mr. Wesley to see it more clearly than ever before, and the longer he lived the more firmly established he was in those truths, as all his after life so fully testifies.

And just here it may not be altogether out of place for me to state, that we as Methodists believe that 'bishops and presbyters are one order,' not because Lord King believed it, nor even because John Wesley believed it, but because we find it clearly taught just where they found it, namely, in the holy Scriptures. As Presbyter has so fully dealt with this, and doubtless will again, I am loath to take up much space with its discussion, and yet it may be well just to drop a hint or two for the benefit of any who may see these letters and not those of Presbyter.

First, then, I remark that although the terms bishop and presbyter or elder frequently occur in the New Testament, they are used interchangeably and synonymously. Each is applied to the same person, showing that a bishop was an elder, and *vice versa.* Then again they are never mentioned together in the Scriptures, clearly showing that they are one and the same office. We read of 'bishops and deacons,' Phil. 1:1., but not 'bishops and elders' or 'bishops and presbyters' or 'presbyters and elders,' because that would be as tautological as to say 'bishops and bishops,' &c. To suppose the offices identical is quite consistent with the language of inspiration, which certainly cannot be said if we take the opposite ground.

In the 20th chapter of Acts we read of Paul calling together the '*elders* of the church,' and said to them, 'Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy

Ghost hath made you *overseers*.' Here the apostle calls the 'elders' 'overseers'—the word translated 'overseers' being precisely the same as that translated 'bishops' in Phil. 1:1. From this, then, it is undeniably clear that, according to divine inspiration *an elder is a bishop*.

Peter and John, each calls himself 'an elder,' and even Layman will concede that they were both 'bishops,' and having in the preceding paragraph proven that an elder is a bishop, I need not occupy more space on this subject, having briefly, but clearly shown to the candid reader that those different terms are used in the Scriptures interchangeably and therefore synonymously, referring to the same persons and to the same office.

Another word in passing. We read of a plurality of elders or bishops in one church. At Ephesus we read of *elders* and at Philippi we read of *bishops*—showing that there were a number of elders or bishops over the church in each of these towns or cities. This well accords with the practice of non-episcopal churches which frequently have several ministers in one place, but how does it accord with the usages of our Episcopal friends and their diocesan bishops?

But to proceed. Layman next asks a question, namely, 'Why did Wesley apply to the Greek bishop Erasmus in 1763 to ordain some of his preachers.' This is a question very easy to answer, and the answer will show the utter incorrectness of Layman's unwarrantable conclusion, 'This one act proves that he did not believe he had the right to ordain because he was a presbyter.' It proves nothing of the kind. Even Layman has had to admit that up to the year 1784 Wesley held that a presbyter had the right to ordain; only ridiculously claiming that though he 'might have been blinded for a season,' yet he saw his

error in 1789. The absurdity of this conclusion of Layman I have shown by referring to the fact that in that very year Wesley showed his faith by his works and actually performed acts of ordination himself!

But this year 1763 referred to by Layman comes within the period of Wesley's 'blindness' as our modest (?) eagle-eyed (?) churchman is pleased to style it. A little confused and inconsistent of Layman to be sure, but 'part and parcel' with the rest of his writings.

But has not one but Wesley ever asked another for certain reasons, to do what he might legally have done himself. Do not ministers, as a general thing, employ others to baptize their children? But in the case now under consideration Wesley has not left us in doubt as to his reasons for pursuing the course he did. In the same letter, dated Bristol, September 10, 1784, to which reference has so frequently been made, after affirming his long-settled conviction that presbyters being the same order as bishops had the same right to ordain, he explains his own conduct in not having, up to that time, exercised the right, as follows: 'For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right by ordaining part of our travelling preachers. But I have still refused; not only for peace sake, but because I was determined, as little as possible, to violate the established order of the national church to which I belonged.'

Thus easily have I answered Layman's question by simply directing his attention to Mr. Wesley's own explanation of the matter, viz.—'for peace sake,' and, 'to violate as little as possible the established order of the national church.'

Mr. Wesley then proceeds in the same letter: "But the case is widely different between England and North

America. Here there are bishops who have a legal jurisdiction ; in America there are none, neither any parish minister ; so that, for some hundreds of miles together, there is none either to baptize, or to administer the Lord's Supper. Here, therefore, my scruples are at an end ; and I conceive myself at full liberty, as I violate no order, and invade no man's rights, by appointing and sending labourers into the harvest."

Here Mr. Wesley declares his right to ordain, and that in so doing he *violates no order*, and *invades no man's rights*, thus once more clearly showing that he firmly held the belief that 'bishops and presbyters are one order.'

But as I have determined, according to intimation in my third letter, to conclude the present series with this one, I must not quote further, but proceed to notice the remainder of Layman's letter. On glancing over it I see there is not much that is new to answer, as most of what follows is a sort of rehash of what has been answered already. For instance, he again questions Wesley's right to ordain, being only a presbyter, and again tells us that Wesley 'spoke on King's *supposition* (not proof)' when he declared 'bishops and presbyters are the same order,' and consequently have the same right to ordain.' I have already so thoroughly exposed the weak and unsuccessful attempt of Layman at sophistry on this point that it is wholly unnecessary to do so again. Those who have candidly and intelligently read thus far will be able to appreciate the foregoing statement, and as for Layman I trust he is among the number ; if not, then the most conclusive evidence and logical proof, so far as he is concerned, are useless.

Next, Layman denies that Wesley ordained Dr. Coke, maintaining that he simply 'appointed' him. Now does Layman really believe this? If so,

how does he account for the following language of Mr. Wesley? He says: 'For many years I have been importuned, from time to time, to exercise this right [bishops and presbyters being one order] by ordaining part of our travelling preachers.' And then, after stating that in so doing he 'violates no order,' he says, 'I have *accordingly* appointed Dr. Coke,' etc. Now if Layman knows the meaning of words he must know that the word 'accordingly' links together the request to 'ordain' with his acquiescence in having 'appointed' Dr. Coke. Wesley was too logical to write illogically and too truthful to write untruthfully. By his use of the words he certainly means them to be understood in the same way, as referring to the same thing, stating what he had been 'importuned' to do and why he had 'accordingly' done it. And surely Wesley knew what he was doing. I do not like to make such a comparison, but it is simply a question of veracity between Wesley and Layman, the former declaring he did do a certain thing, and the latter declaring he did not! I have no fear of the verdict of your readers, Mr. Editor, as to which should be believed. Wesley considered he did actually ordain; his brother Charles, not nearly so free from High Church notions, called it by that name, so did those who were thus ordained, and so have historians ever since, and it is now getting rather late in the day for a 'Layman' to expect intelligent people to discredit the fact simply because he knows no better than to deny it.

I may state just here in passing, that the act of ordination does not necessarily imply the imposition of hands, and has not always been performed in that way. Mr. Wesley ordained Dr. Coke, however, by 'appointing' him, and also by the imposition of hands and prayer. He

ordained Mr. Asbury by ‘appointing’ him, and also by the imposition of hands by Dr. Coke who had received ordination at the hands of Mr. Wesley.

Layman scoffs at the idea of the Methodists being called a Church, and intimates that Wesley did not so regard it; but if not, what did Wesley mean when he wrote in 1784, ‘As our American brethren are now totally disentangled both from the State, and from the English Hierarchy, we dare not entangle them again, either with the one or the other. They are now at full liberty simply to follow the Scriptures and the Primitive Church. And we judge it best, that they should stand fast in that liberty, wherewith God has so strangely made them free.’ Free from what? Evidently all English authority of both Church and State, and were now at ‘full liberty’ to follow, not the Church of England but, ‘the Scriptures and the *Primitive Church*.’

In answer to Layman’s next paragraph about Coke and Asbury being ‘placed on precisely the same footing,’ etc., I need add but little more to what I have already stated. Wesley was at this time the recognized head of the Methodist body. Of course then Coke was not. In being sent to America he wished to have authority from Mr. Wesley to do the same work in America as Mr. Wesley did in England and would do in America if there. With this Wesley complied as we have seen, and on reaching America Dr. Coke, assisted by others, proceeded to ordain Mr. Asbury.

Layman tries to make it appear that Dr. Coke did not consider himself duly ordained, which statement goes for nothing when we reflect on the fact that not only was it granted by his own special request, but he at once ‘magnified his office’—not *order*—by ordaining others. What he may or may not have been led by certain con-

siderations to do subsequently has nothing whatever to do with the points now at issue.

I thank Layman for quoting the words of Wesley respecting the title of ‘bishop.’ I was prevented from quoting them in my letter of April 29th only for the sake of brevity. What do they prove? Why simply these two facts: first, that they were no more bishops after that ordination, consecration or appointment than before, in the way that term was usually understood. They had been placed in a higher position or office than ordinary presbyters, being now superintendents, but not to a higher ‘order.’ The other fact is, that Mr. Wesley had become so perfectly disgusted with the English Bishops, whom he designates ‘mitred infidels,’ and declares that the obedience he rendered them was simply ‘in obedience to the laws of the land,’ that we cannot wonder when he heard of one of his superintendents allowing himself to be called by that pretentious title, that he should use the words which Layman has kindly quoted, viz., ‘How can you, how dare you suffer yourself to be called bishop? I shudder, I start at the very thought! Men may call me a knave or a fool, a rascal, a scoundrel, and I am content; but they shall never, by my consent, call me a bishop.’ What a terrible set those bishops must have been!

Again Layman ridiculously asserts that, ‘however, then, he (Wesley) might have been blinded for a season by the sophistical book of King, so as to *suppose* bishops and presbyters were the ‘same order,’ yet now (in 1788) he gives his more mature judgment, that they were not.’ This sentence from Layman contains two false statements, for Wesley did not say he was led to *suppose* bishops and presbyters were the same order, but that he *said* it on Lord King’s ‘supposition,’ which is a very different thing as I have already

shown. I have also shown that the word 'supposition' as there used, according to Layman's own definition in another place, is equivalent to 'undeniable proof!' The other incorrect statement of Layman is to the effect that 'Wesley gives his more mature judgment, that bishops and presbyters were not the same order.' This is wholly unfounded in fact, and Layman can give no evidence to support it, while on the contrary I have already disproved it.

What Layman says in his next two paragraphs requires no more reply than what has already been given. It is useless to repeat. A word, however, on 'apostolic succession,' which Layman again brings to the front. He finds fault with me for making Wesley's statement, 'I never could see it proved; and, I am persuaded, I never shall, refer to apostolic succession. But what else does it refer to according to Layman? Why to the '*uninterrupted* succession of the Roman Bishops.' Well, but how does that affect the matter? Surely Layman will not claim that the Church of England has the 'succession,' but deny it of the Church of Rome. Indeed he has already assumed that the Roman church has it. Then as to the word '*uninterrupted*' which he makes such an ado about, putting it in italics, and stating Wesley did so too, which is not correct, according to my copy of Wesley's Journal,—what difference does that make? When we speak of apostolic succession do we not mean of course an uninterrupted succession from the apostles? Certainly we do, and so does Layman himself, notwithstanding that he now denies it. What 'my critic' means by saying 'Mr. L. misses the whole point of Wesley's saying as above by not observing his own italics' I confess myself utterly unable to guess. From the construction of that sentence it would seem that I had used

some italics and then failed to 'observe' them. But I did not use any in all that paragraph to which Layman refers. The only italics there are those used in naming the paper in which the letter was printed, that form of type being commonly used for the purpose.

But I have stated that the *uninterrupted* succession theory now denied by Layman is the very kind of succession he formerly upheld. Now I would not charge Layman with thus flatly contradicting himself for the sake of trying to prove me in error and if possible get himself out of an uncomfortable position, were I not prepared to prove my charge true. Here, then, is the proof: In letter No. 10 of Layman's pamphlet he says: "The Church of England solemnly declares in the face of the world that from the Apostles' days to our own the church of Christ has never known anything of a ministry which did not consist of bishops, priests, and deacons, with authority transmitted in 'unbroken succession' from the first age to our own." Again, I find in letter No. 8 of Layman's pamphlet the following words in reference to 'the church': "And she requires of those who officiate at her altars that they should be episcopally ordained; that is that they should be ordained by a bishop who has derived his authority from some of the bishops who went before him, in uninterrupted succession since the Apostles' days. This is the doctrine of the Apostolical Succession."

Now, could anyone believe that a man who professes so much wisdom, courtesy and goodness as Layman would fain have your readers believe he possesses, and who scruples not to charge those who simply state the truth, with want of candour, &c.,—would so far forget himself, or forget what he had so recently written, as

to eat up his own words in the way he has done? But facts are stubborn things, and, as I have just shown, it is a fact that while in Layman's letter now under review he uses the word 'uninterrupted' three times within little more than a dozen lines, italicizing it every time, and actually admits Wesley's statement that an 'uninterrupted succession is what no man can prove' to be 'an obvious fact enough,' yet in his pamphlet he most positively asserts in one chapter that 'the church' has an 'unbroken succession,' and in another chapter that she has an 'uninterrupted succession!' Surely it is 'an obvious fact enough' that Layman has stated what is not a fact either in his letter or his pamphlet since *the one flatly contradicts the other!* Layman talks of 'dilemmas' and 'choice of horns.' It is now my turn; so I offer him his choice. His pamphlet and his letter contradict each other. Which will he admit contains the false statement?

Again Layman returns to the task of attempting to prove that John Wesley believed in the succession theory, and actually goes back, not merely to the year 1745, but to the year 1739. Now, even if Wesley had affirmed his belief in that doctrine in the year 1739 it would be unfair to quote it as his matured opinion, as already pointed out. But what did he say in that year itself to prove it? He simply told a scoffer named Nash who asked by what authority he preached, that it was 'by the authority of Jesus Christ, conveyed to him by the Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid hands upon him and said, Take thou authority to preach the Gospel.' Upon this sandy foundation does Layman rest his assertion that "Wesley never could have doubted the apostolic succession of the Christian ministry, as a literal fact; nor his own share therein." Still, I am sure no

one but Layman or those who look through his glasses would ever see 'literal apostolic succession' either interrupted or 'uninterrupted' in those words. They simply imply that he considered himself a duly ordained and properly accredited preacher of the Gospel. Any Methodist or other (non-episcopally) ordained preacher of the Gospel might use similar language, but certainly without any faith whatever in 'apostolic succession as a literal fact.'

Layman then refers to a quotation of mine from John Wesley's letter to his brother Charles in which he states his belief that he is 'a Scriptural *Episcopos* as much as any man in England, or Europe.' He leaves it, however, to find fault with me for not quoting farther on in the letter about 'remaining in the Church of England.' Thus does he again try to deceive your readers, giving the impression that I had omitted something that ought to have been given, but which anyone can see was not relevant to the subject then under discussion. Layman himself did not give the whole letter, but only two sentences. The fact is it is too long, by far, for either of us to quote in full, even if desirable. Still, as Layman seems to think I did not quote enough of it I will give him a little more as follows: 'I submit still, though sometimes with a doubting conscience, to mitred infidels. I do indeed vary from them in some points of discipline: by preaching abroad, for instance, by praying extempore, and by forming societies.' In his reply Charles asks, 'might you not add, and by ordaining?' From which it is clear that Charles Wesley knew that John Wesley had performed the act of ordination, which Layman pretends to deny.

And just here it may not be deemed out of place to quote a few sentences from one of the Church of England's

highest authorities, which certainly favor the views of Wesley on Episcopacy, etc. and the course he pursued, far more than the narrow views of Layman on these subjects.

Hooker says :—

"There may be sometimes very just and sufficient reasons to allow ordination without a Bishop. *The whole church visible being the true original subject of all power, it hath not ordinarily allowed any other than Bishops alone to ordain.* Howbeit, as the ordinary cause is ordinarily in all things to be observed, so it may be in some cases not unnecessary that we decline from the ordinary ways. Men may be extraordinarily yet allowably two ways admitted into spiritual functions in the Church. One is when God himself doth of himself raise up a way ; another, when the exigency of necessity doth constrain to leave the usual ways of the church which otherwise we would willingly keep."—*Ecclesiastical Polity vii.14.*

Again : "Let them [the Bishops] continually bear in mind that it is rather the force of custom whereby the Church having so long found it good to continue the regiment of her virtuous Bishops, doth still uphold, maintain, and honour them in that respect than that any true and heavenly law can be shown by the evidence whereof it may of a truth appear that the Lord himself hath appointed Presbyters forever to be under the regiment of Bishops.—*Ibid vii.5.*

I will not quote the whole of Layman's next paragraph, which is as follows : "Thus, then, so far as we have proceeded, Wesley's testimony leaves modern Methodism not only without a leg to stand on, but *without any legs at all.*"

I have reproduced this as a literary curiosity. Let the reader notice Layman's italics which are just as I have given them. He fancies he has

left modern Methodism not only without a leg to stand on, but *without any legs at all!* I venture the opinion that no living writer (but Layman) would undertake the task of trying to explain the difference between being left 'without a leg' and being left *'without any legs at all.'*

'One other matter,' says Layman, 'and I am through with Mr. L.' He refers to the parable of the tares to prove that the Methodist discipline is wrong in describing the church as composed of 'men having the form and seeking the power of godliness.' Layman contends that this is a 'delusion and directly contrary to the Scriptures,' and that the parable of the tares shows that the church is composed of a mixture, of good and bad. I reminded him that God's people are called in the bible 'a peculiar people,' a 'separated' people, 'washed,' 'holy,' 'sanctified,' and, that in the parable of the tares, notwithstanding that our friend Layman says the field is the church, our Saviour said 'the field is the world.' Layman does not like this and so tells your readers I was 'unable to grapple at close quarters with the fact that God intended His church to be a mixed body—to be composed of the wicked as well as the good,' &c.

Now, as I have 'grappled,' as Layman repeatedly styles it, at such 'close quarters' with nearly all of his two long letters in reply to mine, I have had to be more brief toward the end ; still, I must 'grapple' a little with this matter, as it is of more importance than some of those points already discussed.

First, I will enquire of Layman, 'What is a church?' Doubtless he will allow me to quote what John Wesley gives as 'a true, logical definition,' the twentieth article, namely, "A particular church is 'a congregation of faithful people among whom the

word of God is preached, and the sacraments duly administered." Now will our friend say that 'faithful people' are 'composed of the wicked as well as the good'?

But what does God say about His church? He calls it His 'body,' Eph. 1. 22-23. Will 'my critic' dare to criticise God's word and say, the 'body of Christ' is 'composed of the wicked as well as the good?' Would not that be blasphemy? Is it not God's will that His church should be 'a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish?' So he declares in Eph. 5:27. Many other passages of similar import might be given if necessary.

But if the church is to be composed of the 'wicked as well as the good' why did the Saviour give directions for the treatment of a sinning member, and in case of his refusing to hear the church to 'let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican?' Matt. 18:17. Surely He did not mean that 'heathens and publicans' were to be members of the church, or it would be the same as saying 'let him be unto thee as a church member!' I wonder if that would suit 'my critic.' In 1 Cor. 5:13 St. Paul writes to the Corinthian church, 'Therefore put away from among yourselves that wicked person.' Will Layman dare to say, 'No, let him stay in the church, which is to be composed of the wicked as well as the good?' I was just about to quote the passage in 2 Cor. 6:17-18, but as there are many such why add more? If the church is to be 'composed of the wicked as well as the good' as Layman states, then the whole human family is the church, or at least the same as the church, for all are either 'wicked or good.'

But a word on the parable. Layman, instead of 'grappling' with it himself, applies for help to a renegade

Methodist, 'now a churchman.' Now I may say that since Layman's sneer at my own opinion on the parable, I have also consulted 'learned commentators,' and out of eleven, four took his view and seven took mine. And, strange as it may appear to some, I noticed this peculiarity about the matter, namely, all those four who maintained that the Church is 'composed of the wicked as well as the good' were Episcopalians! Can it be that they find it necessary in view of facts, that is, the actual state of the Church, to take refuge and comfort in this unscriptural view of the meaning of this parable?

Let the church of God be pure. Indeed the true church of God is pure, for it is 'she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, &c.' (Sol. Song 6:10.)

I could wish to say more on this last subject, but my letter is growing long. I unite with Layman, Mr. Editor, in thanking you for your kindness in affording space for these letters. Long as they have been I would have asked for more space had I not been aware of the fact that your readers are now to have the privilege of hearing again from 'Presbyter.' But for this I would have enlarged on several points, whereas I have thought best to confine my remarks almost exclusively to a direct answer to Layman. If in doing so I have written anything which has had the appearance of harshness or severity it has not been from any unkind personal feeling, but simply because I believed the facts of the case demanded it. Truth often cuts with a keen edge. Layman bade me farewell in his last letter to me, but having referred to me so often in his letters to Presbyter, in concluding them he thought well to say, 'Again, Mr. Lawson, Farewell!'

I shall not trifle with Lyman's feelings nor those of your readers! I

shall not conclude with anything so painfully like a 'farewell' or 'funeral address' as those affecting and touchingly pathetic sentences at the conclusion of friend Layman's last letter. Nor shall I take time or space to recapitulate, but hope, if spared, and necessity should arise, to again find time to

write, and that you, Mr. Editor, will afford space to print my letters in the columns of your excellent journal.

Meantime I remain,

Yours sincerely,

JAMES LAWSON.

Methodist Parsonage, Cobden, Ont.

ERRATA.

In letter No. 2, page 4, fifth line from bottom of first column, for eight read eighth.

Page 4, second column, line 21 from bottom, for **ordinarily** read **ordinarily,** and for refer read refers.

Page 5, first column, line 21 from top, for attend read attends.

In letter No. 3, page 2, first column, line 4 from bottom, for difference read different.

Page 3, second column, line 18 from top, for works read words.

