is given to every man to profit withal." No believer can claim exemption from this great work; for with the grace of the Holy Ghost he has received some "gift," which he is expected to employ for the "profit" of others. Churches whose members thus show that they are "anointed ones," and that they feel themselves called to "stand before the Lord," may calmly and confidently survey all forms of reproach and of opposition. They may cry out and shout in happy triumph; for great will be "the Holy One of Israel in the midst" of them. Then will Christ be "first, last, midst, and without end."

> "For this the pleading Spirit groans, And cries in all Thy banish'd ones; Greatest of gifts, Thy love impart, And make us of one mind and heart.

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Join every soul that looks to Thee In bonds of perfect charity; Now, Lord, the glorious fulness give, And all in all for ever live!"

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"THE PECULIARITIES OF METHODIST DOCTRINE."*

Iz was an act of good judgment on the part of Mr. Pope to select the theology and Church-order of Methodism as the subjects of his "Address" in the "open session" of the recent Irish Conference. Both our tenets and our economy are largely misunderstood by persons who occupy prominent positions in some of the older Churches of the United Kingdom. It is possible they may have been indifferent to what constitutes the characteristics of a Church which many have affected to despise. The high ecclesiastical pretensions of some have induced them to ignore the "Methodist Revival" as far as they could ; and have caused them, when it has forced itself upon their attention, unintelligently to denounce it as an exhibition of fanatical religious feeling. Others may have looked upon it with an unfriendly eye as unpleasantly intrusive. So long as it remained a comparatively obscure sect, few beyond its own pale cared to make themselves acquainted with its peculiarities in respect either of doctrine or organization. As a consequence, it has been much misrepresented both by avowed enemies, and by some that were disposed to regard it with friendly feeling.

^{•&}quot;The Pesuliarities of Methodist Doctrine. An Address delivered in the open Session of the Irish Wesleyan-Methodist Conference, June 19th, 1873. By the Rev. W. B. Pope, Theological Tutor, Didsbury College." London: sold at the Wesleyan Conference Office. 1873.

It has nevertheless made itself known as a power for good in the nation, and can no longer be relegated into a region of obscurity. Recently it has obtained a large amount of attention, the public press having noted many of its proceedings with evident interest. Whether this is an advantage to us as a community, is a point on which different opinions may be held; we have not, however, here to deal with that question.

It is curious to observe the various occasions of the attention which Methodism has of late received. In the conviction that a great mistake was made in its expulsion from the Established Church, a considerable number of excellent men have apparently indulged the supposition that it was possible to reduce it to submission to episcopal authority, and so to absorb it in the old organization. Clearly these persons do not see that its ejectment was inevitable; and that its present position is the legitimate result of principles and modes of action which obtained from the beginning. We are not disposed here to criticize the motives of those who have made certain overtures, though to many they was a decidedly selfish aspect. Probably it was thought that Methodism could be won by fair speeches. It is obvious, however, that, such means proving unsuccessful, it is not even yet to be allowed to assert its independence unchallenged and unrebuked. The charge against us, as a Church, of schism and invalidity has been recently repeated, after the old style, in the most formal and offensive manner. All this is based on a disreputable want of knowledge; and is vain and futile. While we have no complaint to make of the tone of the public press in the attention which it has bestowed on the character and affairs of Methodism, it is necessary for us to say that not a few who treat the subject possess at the most only a very partial knowledge of it. We are not surprised at this. A system of doctrine so complete, and, in some sense, so peculiar, and an organization so elaborate, must be specially and patiently studied to be completely understood. It is no feeling of varity that prompts us to own that we are wishful to be so understood. both by the Churches generally, and the public at large. It is rather the result of a conviction that when this comes to be. Methodism will be regarded as a distinct agency, originated and maintained by the grace and providence of God, which is designed to take its own part in the great work of the world's evangelization.

The Address before us is a brief, but able contribution towards the object we desire. We scarcely think that Mr. Pope intended it to be apologetic; but rather explanatory. Considering its brevity, it is remarkable for its completeness. We should be glad to see it elaborated into a treatise, and have no doubt as to the great zervice which, so expanded, it would render. Essential particulars which are here briefly handled would receive the exhaustive treatment which they merit. We have admired the perfect mastery of the various doctrinal confessions adverted to, and the fine appreciation of differences between them and our own, which are indicated. This synoptical presentment of our doctrinal views must show to all who are disposed to look into the matter, that the spiritual life of Methodism is the result of its Scriptural theology; and that it has been largely influenced by those points of doctrine which other Churches have failed fully to recognize and develop.

As Mr. Pope justly observes, Methodism does not assert itself to be the recipient of any new revelation: it is not in any sense Montanist in its character. It only claims to have read in Scripture with clearness and fulness the Divine method and provisions of redemption, "giving special prominence to some aspects of it which have been too much hidden from the eyes of men." In common with other evangelical Churches, it maintains its fidelity towards the Holy Scriptures as being of Divine origin. It is impossible not to observe the destructive tendencies, notwithstanding orthodox formularies, betrayed in Churches around us in relation to this fundamental point. The true inspiration and authority of the Bible are threatened by the attempt of some to co-ordinate, after the manner of Rome, the voice of the Church with that of the Holy Spirit, and thus to introduce confusion and contradiction. Others will only admit that a Divine revelation exists in the Scriptures. a notion which necessarily leaves it uncertain where that revelation is to be found. There are still others who profess to find the intimation of the Divine will in the moral nature of the individual man, thus either entirely superseding the written Word, or subordinating it to the human judgment.

On that central subject of Christian theology, the mediatorial work of Christ, it is our peculiarity, we believe, to follow with precision the line of truth among the diverse views of many others. We essentially differ from those who limit the efficacy of Christ's stonement, applied through the medium of the water of baptism, to the original sin of the race, which necessitates the notion of a continuance of "the one eternal offering " on "altars which man has raised and not God," and of supplementary human merit. We are equally distant from the view which makes the Saviour's atonement an offering presented only in behalf of the individual objects of electing love. By this theory, the atonement is reduced to the nature and dimensions of a commercial transaction between the Father and the Son; and is exposed to the possible suggestion of an opposition or contrariety between the Divine Persons. There is another and fatal error on this central subject,---that of considering the Saviour's self-sacrifice to be designed to operate on 982

the human heart as furnishing a display of Divine justice in the forgiveness of sin first visited upon the voluntary Representative of the race; or of love, by the contemplation of which the souls of men are to be won from evil. Regarding all these views as incomplete, we firmly hold that the great propitiation was in behalf of all mankind. The atoning Son was the gift of the Father's love; and in His offering of Himself He stood forth as the Vindicator of the Father's justice. Mankind fell in Adam by the power of Satan; and mankind are redeemed in Christ by the power of God: the redemption of Christ is commensurate with the needs of humanity. We should have been well pleased if Mr. Pope had given us an exposition of St. Paul's teaching on this point as contained in Rom. v., where the Apostle draws the parallel between the first and the second Adam, which we hold to be perfect and complete.

The work of the Holy Spirit in His administration of the benefits of redemption is stated in the Address with great preci-In virtue of the sacrifice accomplished on the Cross, the sion. Holy Spirit is shed forth upon the entire family of man as a Spirit of conviction, by which they are to be brought to Christ for personal salvation. It is thus that our theology, in its universal offer of salvation, is preserved on the one hand from all reservation which the thought of an eternal decree must induce ; and on the other from that latitudinarian extension, or comprehension. which makes "the common benefits of redemption all its benefit." We insist everywhere on the necessity of repentance, which, though "unto life," is no part of that life itself. As to the experience of personal salvation, our peculiarity consists in maintaining that the Holy Spirit directly imparts to the believer an assurance of his participation in the benefits of redemption : and also that this witness is the privilege of all those who comply with the conditions of salvation. The great blessings contemplated by the Gospel are presented in Scripture under various aspects, and are variously arranged by different theologies. The arrangement which we ourselves have adopted is in perfect harmony with the Scriptare representations of the work of the Holy Spirit. He is the witness to the sinner of his justification. He is also the "Spirit of adoption." He is, further, the Spirit by which the believer is " sealed unto the day of redemption." These testimonies are one; while the witness of forgiveness points to the past, that of adoption is our present assurance, and "the seal of consecration points onward to the day of redemption." As these testimonies "agree in one, so they cannot be disjoined." In this relation, Methodist theology rejects the notion of an assurance based on "sacramental means and ordinancos," and dependent on priestly absolution : while it maintains that the Word and the Sacraments are the means through which the Spirit accomplishes His witnessing and renewing work. It will not allow Christ and His work to be superseded by priestly intervention; neither will it allow the Divinely-appointed means to be superseded by any supposed internal light. "Though faith is not itself assurance, the one follows so hard upon the other, that they are in the supreme blessedness of appropriating trust indistinguishable;" the believer's assurance is "the assurance of faith" that Christ "loved *me*, and gave Himself for *me*." It is not bestowed as a special favour for particular reasons; nor is it an assurance which nothing can disturb. For the time that now is, it is the assurance of *faith*; and with reference to the future, it is the assurance of *hope*. "Probation governs all our theology."

The theology of Methodism is, in some sense, peculiar also in declaring the entireness of Christian sanctification, and the attainableness of that great privilege in the present life. We regret that on this point many with whom we largely agree are vehemently opposed to us. "We believe that the Divine Spirit who administers redemption is as mighty in administering it as the incarnate Son was in accomplishing it." To us it is matter for surprise that any who hold "the finished work" of Christ, should doubt the provision which that work makes, by the administration of the Spirit, for the removal of all iniquity. We find this precious truth in Scripture ; and must hold it with the utmost tenacity, and preach it with the greatest sincerity and earnestness. It is possible for the Ohristian to be "sanctified wholly," to be preserved in that high state of grace to the coming of the Lord, to become "dead indeed unto sin," to be "filled with the Spirit," to have the whole "body of sin" within him "destroyed." Every believer is urged to "cleanse" himself "from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit," ta "perfect holiness in the fear of God," to be perfect as his "Father in heaven is perfect," to love God with "all his heart," and "his neighbour as himself." We plead for no more than these Scriptures teach: Our idea of the perfection of humanity is realized in the attainment of the condition here indicated.

The more highly we value this sacred truth, the more carefully should we guard it against all abuse. But there is no need for a hesitating timidity in our assertion of all that it involves. When is this state of grace attainable? In the present life, while we are fulfilling the mission with which our Father in heaven has intrusted us. Our conception of the mode of its attainment will be regulated by our conception of the blessing itself,—of that "perfect love" which "casteth out fear." There must be a moment when that "perfect love" is realized. Why should we scruple to preach the *instantaneousness* of its acquirement? On this point the language of the Address is not quite so distinct as we should like it to have been.* It is said, "Let us not

• It becomes us to remark, however, that the author has elsewhere spoken distinctly and copiously both of "the act of God" and the "act of intense devotion " on the part of man, as they are alike concerned in the attainment of entire sanctification. Two passages of his comment on St. Paul's prayer for the Thessalonians, in which beauty of expression and profoundness of truth are admirably combined, occur to us as more adequately treating the important subject touched upon in the Address. Speaking of the "entireness of sanctification," "blamelessness" of the "whole spirit and soul and body," he observes,-"There is a consecrating act of God put forth to the utmost necessary point.It is the function, act, and energy of the Holy Ghost-the God of peaceapplied through the truth to the centre of man's nature, or rather to his entire being. The work is one of Divine power, a work which God begins, continues, and brings to perfection : He will do it. The prayer gives all the glory to God: man is supposed in his finished holiness to be filled with the Spirit. Now this separates our sanctification from any and every disciplinary selfconsecration which man by his own effort may attain. It is not the result of a new direction or impetus given to our faculties : it is through no energy of the self-consecrating will; through no contemplation of the illuminated reason; through no mighty outgoings of the regenerate feeling. There is a power above and behind all these ; using them, indeed, each and all, but not leaving the recovery of holiness to them. It is not the moral agent retrieving himself by Divine aid, but a new and more abundant life infused and sustained and brought to perfection, within man's own being indeed, but by a power above it. Here is the test of all systems of theology, of all schools of interpretation, of all views of evangelical privilege."

In reference more particularly to the "spirit," in its present realization of the unspeakable gift, it is added, "The perfect restoration of the Divine image belongs to a future economy, where entire sanctification is swallowed up in glory. Meanwhile the spirit is consecrated in all its faculties. The reason is filled with truth, and becomes a mirror capable of reflecting the Divine image, an eye that can in everything see God ; not glorified as yet, not healed of all its infirmities, but entirely dedicated to its one original and long-forgotten function, that of being the depositary of the supreme first principles of goodness, rectitude, and truth. The conscience is sanctified unto perfect fidelity as an internal legislator true to the truth, as an incorruptible witness pacified, and as an interpreter of the Divine judgment delivered from all fear. And the will is sanctified: not raised, indeed, to its utmost strength; but consecrated wholly, and deepening in its consecration as knowledge widens; altogether sanctified as the servant of its own supreme choice and intention, and as the master of all its own acts; sanctified by release from every impediment of unholy motives, and by the constant influence of the truth applied by the Spirit: the impulse behind it, the end before it, and all its means between the two, consecrated in the unity of one supreme principle-the glory of God."

The human action, the complement to this "act of God," this energy of the Spirit, which is necessary for the attainment of the great result in the soul of the believer, is set forth with equal clearness :---"Entire sanctification, as distinguished from sanctification simply so termed, may be regarded as the confirmed, habitual, no longer interrupted devotion of the whole being to (iod. As the power that created the world sustains it by an abiding and omnipresent

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erect the means of attainment, [whether] instantaneous or otherwise, [or] the evidences which seal it. into doctrines of our faith." Whether gradual or otherwise it is undoubtedly received by faith, by the personal appropriation of an entire Saviour. "The evidence which seals it" is the gracious action of the Holy Spirit. awakening a consciousness of its possession. "The silent assertion of its truth in our lives" is certainly a strong argument in its defence : but we can scarcely say it is "the best." The Scriptural argument must take precedence of all others. Neither can we easily bring ourselves to think that "the only confession it admits is the negative one: that of a life not inconsistent with the fact." If we allow this, the Church will never know that any of its members have received the fulness of spiritual life. To discourage the verbal confession of its attainment would go far to render the preaching of it ineffective. In a deliverance less terse than this "Address" necessarily was, this sentence would doubtless have received some qualifying term or terms. The writer's meaning is, that the only confession which the Scripture makes general and absolute is the "negative" one. It is sufficient to sav. "None of us should be in haste to make redemption from the corruption of the heart. or his perfect love to God, the subject of his confession."

In our organization we hold the general "fellowship" which "binds ministers and people in the ordinances and polity of the Christian religion." These together constitute the visible Church of Christ. Methodism knows nothing of an ecclesiastical hierarchy; but it possesses an organization which secures all the advantages of a Scriptural episcopacy, while it maintains equality of ministerial order. We venture to say that our evangelical Church-order is as near an approach to that of the Apostolic epistles, and the immediately post-apostolic times, as the world has ever seen. In its well-balanced arrangements it

indwelling energy, so the power that can fix upon God the strength of the whole soul can keep it fixed on Him. In wholly sanctified spirits this estabishing grace reigns; and that is the distinction between them and others, between them and their former selves. It is the concentrated devotion of all to God made permanent, that makes the difference. A strong influence of grace descending in answer to prayer at an opportune moment may carry the whole soul to God for a season: may exclude every other thought from the mind, still every alien feeling in the soul, and draw the entire will into conformity with the will of God. This may often be the case for a time, and during strong excitement; but not so often is there continuance in such a state. When the prayer of faith that brings this blessing becomes unceasing in its fervent and effectual inwrought power, this act of intense devotion becomes the tranquil state of the soul."—Weelcyan-Methodist Magazine for March, 1871, pp. 206, 207, 209.

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embraces the advantages of other systems, while it avoids their incongruities and defects. As a people we are peculiar "for our own conventional idea of fellowship." Whatever may be the judgment of others we must hold to this form of Christian communion as essential to our Church-life. The more it is cherished, the more precious it will become. The promotion of its efficiency cannot be too carefully cultivated; nor can we too earnestly urge our people to be assiduous in the use of it: under the influence of the Christian love which will then be quickened, they will manifest their zeal for God by active labour in those departments of the sacred work for which they have special adaptations. "We have many members, but one body." It is the vigorous action of the entire body that will obtain the highest amount of success, under the sanction and blessing of the Spirit, who is "the Author and Giver of life."*

We rejoice as a Church in our "fellowship" with "the catholic Church of the common Lord." The catholic feeling of Methodism is indeed proverbial; and we are not sure whether the Connexion has not sustained some injury through the loose views on this subject which have largely prevailed among us. While maintaining the true spirit of catholicism, we need to teach our people sound Church-principles; so that they may be governed

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^{*} Mr. Pope's explicit testimony to the value and importance of the class-meeting is well worth quoting in full :---" Throughout the world, but especially in Great Britain, the Methodist people hold fast the tradition of a Christian communion which confesses the name of Jesus not only before men generally, as in the Eucharist, but in the assemblies of the brethren themselves. Not that we have a monopoly of this kind of fellowship. Meetings for mutual confession, and edification, and counsel, have been always aimed at in the purest ages and purest forms of the Church ; but we are the only community that has incorporated them in the very fibre of our constitution. Growing out of our Society character, this institution we have aimed to interweave with the organization of the Church also : not yet with perfect success, but with results that encourage the hope of perfect success. As it is rooted in our ecclesiastical economy, so it is rooted in the affections of our people. No form in which the social element of Christianity has found expression has enlisted more universal enthusiasm in its favour than the old class-meeting. Other forms of confederation have been gloried in, lived for, and sometimes died for, in the history of Christendom. But I question if any institution, grafted on Scriptural precept, has ever commanded such widespread and pervading homage of all orders of the devout, or approved itself by such practical and irresistible evidences of good, as the Methodist class-meeting. This is of itself, or ought to be, its sufficient defence. Incautious and unskilful hands have been meddling with it of late; but in vain. It may admit of much improvement in detail and in administration, but its foundations are secure and inviolable."

in their intercourse with other Christian communions by an intelligent appreciation of their own economy, and a firm attachment to it amidst the various changes of place and condition which arise in the current of individual life.

It is highly fitting, as Mr. Pope reminds us, to close such discussion "at the feet of Christ, and of Christ crucified;" and while speaking of our "peculiarities," as we must do, never to forget "the thought of that one body in Christ which has no peculiarity save the eternal blessedness of being His peculiar people." "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord." We most cordially thank the author for his able, graceful, and fine-spirited Address, and recommend it to the thoughtful study of all our readers.

THE UNITY OF THE PHYSICAL WORLD.

(Concluded from page 909.)

HAVING exhibited the proof of the co-existent unity of the system of matter, derived from the order and uniformities of the Solar System, we proceed to direct attention to

II. EXTENSION OF THE LAWS OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM TO THE FIXED STARS.

(1.) Distances of the stars. Vast as is the interval from the sun to the remotest planet, it is insignificant compared with the gulf of space which intervenes between Neptune and the fixed stars. Neptune is about 2,745,000,000 miles distant from the sun; but Alpha Centauri, the nearest star, is removed 7,466 times that distance, or 20,496,000,000,000 miles. It will convey some idea of the relative values of these numbers to state that if we represent the distance of Neptune from the sun by a line eight (7.8) inches in length, the distance of the earth from the sun will correspond to a line one quarter (0.26) of an inch in length, and the distance of Alpha Centauri will correspond to a line one mile in length. If we reduce the distance of Alpha Centauri to one hundred feet, the distance of Neptune would be eighteen ten thousandths (0.0018) of an inch, which is about one sixth the diameter of a human hair.

On the same scale of representation as before, the star 61 Cygni will be removed to the distance of 2.4 miles; Vega, 5.9 miles; Sirius, the brightest of the stars, 6.1 miles; Iota Ursæ Majoris, 6.9 miles; Arcturus, 7.2 miles; Polaris, 18.7 miles; Capella, 20.0 miles. These are the distances of stars scattered about the nearest outskirts of the firmament. The great mass of the fixed stars lies hundreds of times as remote as these. Sir William Herschel believed that he reached with his great telescope stars which lie 2,300 times the average distance of stars of the