

**METHODISM** (E. Review, 1808)  
*Causes of the Increase of Methodism and Dissension.* By  
Robert Acklem Ingram, B.D. Hatchard

This is the production of an honest man, possessed of a fair share of understanding. He cries out lustily (and not before it is time) upon the increase of Methodism; proposes various remedies for the diminution of this evil; and speaks his opinions with a freedom which does him great credit, and convinces us that he is a respectable man. The clergy are accused of not exerting themselves. What temporal motive, Mr. Ingram asks, have they for exertion? Would a curate, who had served thirty years upon a living in the most exemplary manner, secure to himself by such a conduct, the slightest right or title to promotion in the Church? What can you expect of a whole profession, in which there is no more connection between merit and reward than between merit and beauty, or merit and strength? This is the substance of what Mr. Ingram says upon this subject; and he speaks the truth. We regret, however, that this gentleman has thought fit to use against the dissenters the exploded clamour of Jacobinism; or that he deems it necessary to call in to the aid of the Church the power of intolerant laws in spite of the odious and impolitic tests to which the dissenters are still subjected. We believe them to be very good subjects; and we have no doubt but that any further attempt upon their religious liberties, without reconciling them to the Church, would have a direct tendency to render them disaffected to the State.

Mr. Ingram (whose book, by the bye, is very dull and tedious) has fallen into the common mistake of supposing his readers to be as well acquainted with his subject as he is himself; and has talked a great deal about dissenters, without giving us any distinct notions of the spirit which pervades these people—the objects they have in view—or the degree of talent which is to be found among them. To remedy this very capital defect, we shall endeavour to set before the eyes of the reader, a complete section of the tabernacle; and to present him with a near view of those sectaries, who are at present at work upon the destruction of the orthodox churches, and are destined hereafter, perhaps, to act as conspicuous a part in pub fairs, as the children of Sion did in the time of Cromwell.

The sources from which we shall derive our extracts are the Evangelical and *Meth. Mag.s* for the year 1807;—works which are said to be circulated to the amount of 18,000 or 20,000 every month; and which contain the sentiments of Arminian and Calvinistic Methodists, and of the *evangelical* clergymen of the Church of England. We shall use the general term of Methodism, to designate these three classes of fanatics, not troubling ourselves to point out the finer shades and nicer discriminations of lunacy, but treating them all as in one general conspiracy against common sense, and rational orthodox Christianity.

In reading these very curious productions, we seemed to be in a new world, and to have got among a set of beings, of whose existence we had hardly before entertained the slightest conception. It has been our good fortune to be acquainted with many truly religious persons, both in the Presbyterian and Episcopalian churches; and from their manly, rational, and serious characters, our conceptions of true practical piety have been formed. To these confined habits, and to our want of proper introductions among the children of light and grace, any degree of surprise is to be attributed, which may be excited by the publications before us; which, under opposite circumstances, would (we doubt not) have proved as great a source of instruction and delight to the Edinburgh reviewers, as they are to the most melodious votaries of the tabernacle.

It is not wantonly, or with the most distant intention of trifling upon serious subjects, that we call the attention of the public to these sorts of publications. Their circulation is so enormous, and so increasing,—they contain the opinions, and display the habits of so many human beings,—that they cannot but be objects of curiosity and importance. The

common and the middling classes of people are the purchasers; and the subject is religion,—though not that religion certainly which is established by law, and encouraged by national provision. This may lead to unpleasant consequences, or it may not; but it carries with it a sort of aspect, which ought to insure to it serious attention and reflection.

It is impossible to arrive at any knowledge of a religious sect, by merely detailing the settled articles of their belief: it may be the fashion of such a sect to insist upon some articles very slightly; to bring forward others prominently; and to consider some portion of their formal creed as obsolete. As the knowledge of the jurisprudence of any country can never be obtained by the perusal of volumes which contain some statutes that are daily enforced, and others that have been silently antiquated: in the same manner, the practice, the preaching, and the writing of sects, are comments absolutely necessary to render the perusal of their creed of any degree of utility.

It is the practice, we believe, with the orthodox, both in the Scotch and the English churches, to insist very rarely, and very discreetly, upon the particular instances of the interference of Divine Providence. They do not contend that the world is governed only by general laws—that a Superintending Mind never interferes for particular purposes; but such purposes are represented to be of a nature very awful and sublime,—when a guilty people are to be destroyed —when an oppressed nation is to be lifted up, and some remarkable change introduced into the order and arrangement of the world. With this kind of theology we can have no quarrel; we bow to its truth; we are satisfied with the moderation which it exhibits; and we have no doubt of the salutary effect which it produces upon the human heart. Let us now come to those special cases of the interference of Providence as they are exhibited in the publications before us:

*An interference with respect to the Rev. James Moody*

‘Mr. James Moody was descended from pious ancestors, who resided at Paisley:—his heart was devoted to music, dancing, and theatrical amusements: of the latter he was so fond, that he used to meet with some men of a similar cast to rehearse plays, and used to entertain a hope that he should make a figure upon the stage. To improve himself in music, he would rise very early, even in severely cold weather, and practise on the German flute: by his skill in music and singing, with his general powers of entertaining he became a desirable companion: he would sometimes venture to profane the day of God, by turning it into a season of carnal pleasure, and would join in excursions on the water, to various parts of the vicinity of London. But the time was approaching, *when the Lord, who had designs of mercy for him, and for many others by his means, was about to stop him in his vain career of sin and folly.* There were two professing servants in the house where he lived; one of these was a porter, who, in brushing his clothes, would say, ‘Master James, this will never do—you must be otherwise employed—you must be a minister of the gospel.’ This worthy man, earnestly wishing his conversion, put into his hands that excellent book which God hath so much owned, *Alleine’s Alarm to the Unconverted.*

‘About this time it pleased God to visit him with a disorder in his eyes, occasioned, as it was thought, by his sitting up in the night to improve himself in drawing. The apprehension of losing his sight occasioned many serious reflections; his mind was impressed with the importance and necessity of seeking the salvation of his soul, and he was induced to attend the preaching of the gospel. The first sermon that he heard with a desire to profit was at Spa-fields Chapel; a place which he had formerly frequented, when it was a temple of vanity and dissipation. Strong convictions of sin fixed on his mind; and he continued to attend the preached word, particularly at Tottenham-Court Chapel. Every sermon increased his sorrow and grief that he had not earlier sought the Lord. It was a considerable time before he found comfort from the gospel. He has stood in the free part of the chapel hearing, with such emotion, that the

tears have flowed from his eyes in torrents; and when he has returned home, he has continued a great part of the night on his knees, praying over what he had heard.

‘The change effected by the power of the Holy Spirit on his heart now became visible to all. Nor did he halt between two opinions, as some persons do; he became at once a decided character, and gave up for ever all his vain pursuits and amusements; devoting himself with as much resolution and diligence to the service of God, as he had formerly done to folly.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 194.

*An interference respecting Cards*

‘A clergyman not far distant from the spot on which these lines were written, was spending an evening—not in his closet, wrestling with his Divine Master for the communication of that grace which is so peculiarly necessary for the faithful discharge of the ministerial function—not in his study, searching the sacred oracles of divine truth for materials wherewith to prepare for his public exercises and feed the flock under his care,—not in pastoral visits to that flock, to inquire into the state of their souls, and endeavour, by his pious and affectionate conversation, to conciliate their esteem, and promote their edification,—but at the *card table*.’— After stating that when it was his turn to deal, he dropt down dead, ‘It is worthy of remark (says the writer), that within a very few years this was the third character in the neighbourhood which had been summoned from the card table to the bar of God.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 262.

*Interference respecting swearing,—a Bee the instrument*

‘A young man is stung by a bee, upon which he buffets the bees with his hat, uttering at the same time the most dreadful oaths and imprecations. In the midst of his fury, one of these little combatants stung him upon the tip of that unruly member (his tongue), which was then employed in blaspheming his Maker. Thus can the Lord engage one of the meanest of His creatures in reprovining the bold transgressor who dares to take His name in vain.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 363.

*Interference with respect to David Wright, who was cured  
of atheism and scrofula by one sermon of Mr. Coles*

This case is too long to quote in the language and with the evidences of the writers. The substance of it is what our title implies. David Wright was a man with scrofulous legs and atheistical principles;—being with difficulty persuaded to hear one sermon from Mr. Coles, he limped to the church in extreme pain, and arrived there after great exertions;—during church time he was entirely converted, walked home with the greatest ease, and never after experienced the slightest return of scrofula or infidelity. *Ev. Mag.*, p. 444.

*The displeasure of Providence is expressed at Captain  
Scott’s going to preach in Mr. Romaine’s Chapel*

The sign of this displeasure is a violent storm of thunder and lightning just as he came into town. *Ev. Mag.*, p. 537.

*Interference with respect to an innkeeper, who was destroyed for having appointed a  
cock-fight at the very time that the service was beginning at the Methodist Chapel*

‘“Never mind,” says the innkeeper, ‘I’ll get a greater congregation than the Methodist parson;—we’ll have a cock-fight.’ But what is man! how insignificant his designs, how impotent his strength, how ill-fated his plans, when opposed to that Being who is infinite in wisdom, boundless in power, terrible in judgment, and who frequently reverses, and suddenly renders abortive, the projects of the Wicked! A few days after the avowal of his intention, the innkeeper sickened,’ &c. &c. And then the narrator goes on to state, that his corpse was carried by the

meeting-house 'on the day and exactly at the time, the deceased had fixed for the cock-fight.' *Meth. Mag.*, p. 126.

In p. 167 *Meth. Mag.* a father, mother, three sons, and a sister, are destroyed by particular interposition.

In p. *Meth. Mag.* 222 a dancing-master is destroyed for irreligion,—another person for swearing at a cock-fight,—and a third for pretending to be deaf and dumb. These are called *recent and authentic accounts* of God's avenging providence.

So much for the miraculous interposition of Providence in cases where the Methodists are concerned. We shall now proceed to a few specimens of the energy of their religious feelings:

*Mr. Roberts's feelings in the month of May, 1793*

'But, all this time, my soul was stayed upon God: my desires increased, and my mind was kept in a sweet praying frame, a going out of myself, as it were, and taking shelter in him. Every breath I drew, ended in a prayer. I felt myself helpless as an infant, dependent upon God for all things. I was in a constant daily expectation of receiving all I wanted; and, on Friday, May - 31st, under Mr. Rutherford's sermon, though entirely independent of it (for I could not give any account of what he had been preaching about), I was given to feel that God was waiting to be very gracious to me; the spirit of prayer and supplication was given me, and such an assurance that I was accepted in the Beloved, as I cannot describe, but which I shall never forget.' *Meth. Mag.*, p. 35.

*Mrs. Elizabeth Price and her attendants hear sacred music on a sudden*

'A few nights before her death, while some neighbours and her husband were sitting up with her, a sudden and joyful sound of music was heard by all present, *although some of them were carnal people*; at which time she thought she saw her crucified Saviour before her, speaking these words with power to her soul, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee, and I love thee freely.' After this she never doubted of her acceptance with God; and on Christmas day following was taken to celebrate the Redeemer's birth in the Paradise of God. MICHAEL COUSIN.' — *Meth. Mag.*, p. 137.

*T. L., a sailor on board the Stag frigate, has a special revelation from our Saviour*

'October 26th, being the Lord's day, he had a remarkable manifestation of God's love to his soul. That blessed morning he was much grieved by hearing the wicked use profane language, when Jesus revealed himself to him, and impressed on his mind these words, 'Follow Me.' This was a precious day to him.' *Meth. Mag.*, p. 140.

*The manner in which Mr. Thomas Cook was accustomed to accost S. B.*

'Whenever he met me in the street, his salutation used to be 'Have you free and lively intercourse with God to-day? Are you giving your whole heart to God?' I have known him on such occasions speak in so pertinent a manner, that I have been astonished at his knowledge of my state. Meeting me one morning, he said, 'I have been praying for you; you have had a sore conflict, though all is well now.' At another time he asked, 'Have you been much exercised these few days, for I have been led to pray that you might especially have suffering grace?'" *Meth. Mag.*, p. 247.

*Mr. John Kestin on his death-bed*

“Oh, my dear, I am now going to glory, happy, happy, happy. I am going to sing praises to God and the Lamb: I am going to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I think I can see my Jesus without a glass between. I can, I feel I can, discern ‘my title clear to mansions in the skies.’ Come, Lord Jesus, come! why are thy chariot-wheels so long delaying?” *Ev. Mag.*, p. 124.

*The Rev. Mr. Mead’s sorrow for his sins*

‘This wrought him up to temporary desperation; his inexpressible grief poured itself forth in groans: ‘Oh that I had never sinned against God! I have a hell here upon earth, and there is a hell for me in eternity!’ One Lord’s day, very early in the morning, he was awoke by a tempest of thunder and lightning; and, imagining it to be the end of the world, his agony was great, supposing the great day of divine wrath was come, and he unprepared; but happy to find it not so.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 147.

*Similar case of Mr. John Robinson*

‘About two hours before he died, he was in great agony of body and mind: it appeared that the enemy was permitted to struggle with him; and being greatly agitated, he cried out, ‘Ye powers of darkness begone!’ This, however, did not last long: ‘the prey was taken from the mighty, and the lawful captive delivered,’ although he was not permitted to tell of his deliverance, but lay quite still and composed.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 177.

*The Reverend William Tennant in a heavenly trance*

“While I was conversing with my brother,’ said he, ‘on the state of my soul, and the fears I had entertained for my future welfare, I found myself in an instant in another state of existence, under the direction of a superior being, who ordered me to follow him. I was accordingly wafted along, I know not how, till I beheld at a distance an ineffable glory, the impression of which on my mind it is impossible to communicate to mortal man. I immediately reflected on my happy change; and thought, Well, blessed be God! I am safe at last, notwithstanding all my fears. I saw an innumerable host of happy beings surrounding the inexpressible glory in acts of adoration and joyous worship; but I did not see any bodily shape or representation in the glorious appearance. I heard things unutterable. I heard their songs and hallelujahs of thanksgiving and praise with unspeakable rapture. I felt joy unutterable, and full of glory. I then applied to my conductor and requested leave to join the happy throng.” *Ev. Mag.*, p. 251.

The following we consider to be one of the most shocking histories we ever read. God only knows how many such scenes take place in the gloomy annals of Methodism:

‘A young man of the name of S—— C——, grandson to a late eminent dissenting minister, and brought up by him, came to reside at K——g, about the year 1803. He attended at the Baptist place of worship, not only on the Lord’s day, but frequently at the week-day lectures and prayer meetings. He was supposed by some to be seriously inclined; but his opinion of himself was, that he had never experienced that divine change, without which no man can be saved.

‘However that might be, there is reason to believe he had been for some years under powerful convictions of his miserable condition as a sinner. In June, 1806, these convictions were observed to increase, and that in a more than common degree. From that time he went into no company, but, when he was not at work, kept in his chamber, where he was employed in singing plaintive hymns, and bewailing his lost and perishing state.

‘He had about him several religious people; but could not be induced to open his mind to them, or to impart to any one the cause of his distress. Whether this contributed to increase it or not, it did increase, till his health was greatly affected by it, and he was scarcely able to work at his business.

‘While he was at meeting on Lord’s day, September 14th, he was observed to labour under very great emotion of mind, especially when he heard the following words: ‘Sinner, if you die without an interest in Christ, you will sink into the regions of eternal death.’

‘On the Saturday evening following, he intimated to the mistress of the house where he lodged, that some awful judgment was about to come upon him; and as he should not be able to be at meeting next day, requested that an attendant might be procured to stay with him. She replied that she would herself stay at home, and wait upon him: which she did.

‘On the Lord’s day he was in great agony of mind. His mother was sent for, and some religious friends visited him; but all was of no avail. That night was a night dreadful beyond conception. The horror which he endured brought on all the symptoms of raging madness. He desired the attendants not to come near him, lest they should be burnt. He said that ‘the bed curtains were in flames,—that he smelt the brimstone,—that devils were come to fetch him,—that there was no hope for him, for that he had sinned against light and conviction, and that he should certainly go to hell.’ It was with difficulty he could be kept in bed.

‘An apothecary being sent for, as soon as he entered the house, and heard his dreadful howlings, he inquired if he had not been bitten by a mad dog. His appearance, likewise, seemed to justify such a suspicion, his countenance resembling that of a wild beast more than that of a man.

‘Though he had no feverish heat, yet his pulse beat above 150 in a minute. To abate the *mania*, a quantity of blood was taken from him, a blister was applied, his head was shaved, cold water was copiously poured over him, and fox-glove was administered. By these means his fury was abated; but his mental agony continued, and all the symptoms of madness, which his bodily strength, thus reduced, would allow, till the following Thursday. On that day he seemed to have recovered his reason, and to be calm in his mind. In the evening he sent for the apothecary, and wished to speak with him by himself. The latter, on his coming, desired every one to leave the room, and thus addressed him: ‘C——, have you not something on your mind?’—‘Ay,’ answered he, ‘*that is it!*’ He then acknowledged that, early in the month of June, he had gone to a fair in the neighbourhood, in company with a number of wicked young men; that they drank at a public house together, till he was in a measure intoxicated; and that from thence they went into other company, where he was criminally connected with a harlot. ‘I have been a miserable creature,’ continued he, ‘ever since; but during the last three days and three nights, I have been in a state of desperation.’ He intimated to the apothecary, that he could not bear to tell this story to the minister: ‘But,’ said he, ‘do you inform him that I shall not die in despair: for light has broken in upon me: I have been led to the great Sacrifice for sin, and I now hope in him for salvation.’

‘From this time his mental distress ceased, his countenance became placid, and his conversation, instead of being taken up as before with fearful exclamations concerning devils and the wrath to come, was now confined to the dying love of Jesus! The apothecary was of opinion, that if his strength had not been so much exhausted, he would now have been in a state of religious transport. His nervous system, however, had received such a shock, that his recovery was doubtful; and it seemed certain, that if he did recover, he would sink into a state of idiocy. He survived this interview but a few days.’ *Ev. Mag.*, pp. 412, 413.

A religious observer stands at a turnpike-gate on a Sunday, to witness the profane crowd passing by; he sees a man driving very clumsily in a gig; the inexperience of the driver provokes the following pious observations:

“‘What (I said to myself) if a single untoward circumstance should happen! Should the horse take fright, or the wheel on either side get entangled, or the gig upset,—in either case what can preserve them? And should a morning so fair and promising bring on evil before night,—

should death on his pale horse appear, —what follows?’ My mind shuddered at the images I had raised.’ *Ev. Mag.*, pp.558, 559.

*Miss Louisa Cook’s rapturous state*

‘From this period she lived chiefly in retirement, either in reading the sacred volume on her knees, or in pouring out her soul in prayer to God. While thus employed, she was not unfrequently indulged with visits from her gracious Lord; and sometimes felt herself to be surrounded, as it were, by his glorious presence. After her return to Bristol, her frame of mind became so heavenly that she seemed often to be dissolved in the love of God her Saviour. *Ev. Mag.*, pp. 576, 577.

*Objection to almanacks*

‘Let those who have been partial to such vain productions only read Isaiah xlvi. 13, and Daniel ii. 27; and they will there see what they are to be accounted of, and in what company they are to be found; and let them learn to despise their equivocal and artful insinuations, which are too frequently blended with profanity; for is it not profanity in them to attempt to palm their frauds upon mankind by Scripture quotations, which they seldom fail to do, especially Judges v. 20, and Job xxxviii, 31? neither of which teaches nor warrants any such practice. Had Baruch or Deborah consulted the stars? No such thing.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 600.

This energy of feeling will be found occasionally to meddle with and disturb the ordinary occupations and amusements of life, and to raise up little qualms of conscience, which, instead of exciting respect, border, we fear, somewhat too closely upon the ludicrous.

*A Methodist footman*

‘A gentleman’s servant, who has left a good place because he was ordered to deny his master when actually at home, wishes something on this subject may be introduced into this work, that persons who are in the habit of denying themselves in the above manner may be convinced of its evils.’ *Ev. Mag.* p.72.

*Doubts if it is right to take any interest for money*

‘*Usury*.—Sir I beg the favour of you to insert the following Case of conscience. I frequently find in Scripture, that *Usury* is particularly condemned; and that it is represented as the character of a good man, that ‘he hath not given forth upon usury, neither hath taken any increase,’ Ezek. xviii, 8., &c. I wish, therefore, to know how such passages are to be understood; and whether the taking of interest for money, as is universally practised among us, can be reconciled with the word and will of God? Q.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 74.

*Dancing ill-suited to a creature on trial for eternity*

‘If dancing be a waste of time; if the precious hours devoted to it may be better employed; if it be a species of trifling ill-suited to a creature on trial for eternity, and hastening towards it on the swift wings of time; if it be incompatible with genuine repentance, true faith in Christ, supreme love to God, and a state of entire devotedness to him,—then is dancing a practice utterly opposed to the whole spirit and temper of Christianity, and subversive of the best interest of the rising generation.’ *Meth. Mag.*, pp. 127, 128.

The Methodists consider themselves as constituting a chosen and separate people, living in a land of atheists and voluptuaries. The expressions by which they designate their own sects, are the *dear people—the elect—the people of God*. The rest of mankind are *carnal people—the people of this world, &c. &c.* The children of Israel were not more separated, through the favour of God, from the Egyptians, than the Methodists are, in their own estimation, from the rest of mankind. We had hitherto supposed that the disciples of the Established churches in England and Scotland had been Christians; and

that after baptism duly performed by the appointed minister, and participation in the customary worship of these two churches, Christianity was the religion of which they were to be considered as members. We see, however, in these publications, men of twenty or thirty years of age first called to a knowledge of Christ *under a sermon* by the Rev. Mr. Venn,—or first admitted into the church of Christ *under a sermon* by the Rev. Mr. Romaine. The apparent admission turns out to have been a mere mockery; and the pseudo-christian to have had no religion at all, till the business was really and effectually done under these sermons by Mr. Venn and Mr. Romaine.

*An awful and general departure from the Christian faith in the Church of England*

‘A second volume of Mr. Cooper’s sermons is before us, stamped with the same broad seal of truth and excellence as the former. Amidst the awful and general departure from the faith, as once delivered to the saints in the Church of England, and sealed by the blood of our Reformers, it is pleasing to observe that there is a remnant, according to the election of grace, who continue rising up to testify the gospel of the grace of God, and to call back their fellows to the consideration of the great and leading doctrines on which the Reformation was built, and the Church of England by law established. The author of these sermons, avoiding all matters of more doubtful disputation, avowedly attaches himself to the great fundamental truths; and on the two substantial pillars, the Jachin and Boaz of the living temple, erects his superstructure. 1. Justification by faith, without works, free and full, by grace alone, through the redemption which is in Jesus Christ, stands at the commencement of the first volume; and on its side rises in the beauty of holiness,’ &c. *Ev. Mag.*, p. 79.

*Mr. Robinson called to the knowledge of Christ under Mr. Venn’s sermon*

‘Mr. Robinson was called in early life to the knowledge of Christ, under a sermon at St. Dunstan’s, by the late Rev. Mr. Venn, from Ezek. xxxvi. 25, 26; the remembrance of which greatly refreshed his soul upon his deathbed.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 176.

*Christianity introduced into the parish of Launton near Bicester, in the year 1807*

‘A very general spirit of inquiry having appeared for some time in the village of Launton, near Bicester, some serious persons were excited to communicate to them the word of life.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 380.

We learn in page 128, *Meth. Mag.*, that twelve months had elapsed from the time of Mrs. Cocker’s joining *the people of God*, before she obtained a clear sense of forgiveness.

*A religious Hoy sets off every week for Margate*

‘*Religious Passengers accommodated.*—*To the Editor.*—Sir, it afforded me considerable pleasure to see upon the cover of your Magazine for the present month, an advertisement, announcing the establishment of a packet, to sail weekly between London and Margate, during the season, which appears to been set on foot for the accommodation of religious char and in which ‘no profane conversation is to be allowed.’

‘To those among the followers of a crucified Redeemer, who are in the habit of visiting the Isle of Thanet in the summer, and who, for the sea air, or from other considerations prefer travelling by water, such a conveyance must certainly be a *desideratum*, especially if they have experienced a mortification similar to that of the writer, in the course of the last summer when shut up in a cabin with a mixed multitude, who spake almost all languages but that of Canaan. Totally unconnected with the concern, and personally a stranger to the worthy owner, I take the liberty of recommending this vessel to the notice of my fellow-Christians; persuaded that they will think themselves bound to patronise and encourage an undertaking that has the honour of the dear Redeemer for its professed object. It ought ever to be remembered, that every talent we possess, whether large or small, is given us in trust to be laid out for God;—and I have often thought that Christians act inconsistently with their high

profession, when they omit, even in their most common and trivial expenditures, to give a decided preference to the friends of their Lord. I do not, however, anticipate any such ground of complaint in this instance, but rather believe, that the religious world in general will cheerfully unite with me, while I most cordially wish success to the Princess of Wales Yacht, and pray that she may ever sail under the divine protection and blessing;—that the humble followers of Him who spoke the storm into a calm, when crossing the lake of Gennesareth, may often feel their hearts glowing with sacred ardour while in her cabins they enjoy sweet communion with their Lord and with each other;—and that strangers, who may be providentially brought among them, may see so much of the beauty and excellency of the religion of Jesus exemplified in their conduct and conversation, that they may be constrained to say, ‘We will go with you, for we perceive that God is with you. —Your God shall be our God, and his people shall henceforth be our chosen companions and associates.’ I am, Mr. Editor, your obliged friend and sister in the gospel, E. T.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 268.

*A religious newspaper is announced in the Ev. M. for September.*—It is said of common newspapers, that *they are absorbed in temporal concerns, while the consideration of those which are eternal is postponed*; the business of this life has superseded the claims of immortality; and the monarchs of the world have engrossed an attention which would have been more properly devoted to the Saviour of the universe.’ It is then stated, ‘that the columns of this paper (*The Instructor, price 6d.*) will be supplied by pious reflections; suitable comments to improve the dispensations of providence will be introduced; and the whole conducted with an eye to our spiritual, as well as temporal welfare. The work will contain the latest news up to four o’clock on the day of publication together with the most recent religious occurrences. The prices of stock, and correct market-tables, will also be accurately detailed.’—*Ev. Mag., September Advertisement.* The Eclectic Review is also understood to be carried on upon Methodistical principles.

Nothing can evince more strongly the influence which Methodism now exercises upon common life, and the fast hold it has got of the people, than the advertisements which are circulated every month in these very singular publications. On the cover of a single number, for example, we have the following:—

‘Wanted, by Mr. Turner, shoemaker, a steady apprentice; he will have the privilege of attending the ministry of the gospel;— a premium expected, p. 3.—Wanted, a serious young woman, as a servant of all work, 3.—Wanted a man of serious character, who can shave, 3.—Wanted, a serious woman, to assist in a shop, 3.—A young person in the millinery line wishes to be in a serious family, 4.—Wants a place, a young man who has brewed in a serious family, 4.—Ditto, a young woman of evangelical principles, 4.—Wanted, an active serious shopman, 5.— To be sold, an eligible residence, with 60 acres of land; gospel preached in three places within half a mile, 5.—A single gentleman may be accommodated with lodging in a small serious family, 5.—To let, a genteel first floor in an airy situation near the Tabernacle, 6.—Wanted, a governess, of evangelical principles and corresponding character, 10.’

The religious vessel we have before spoken of, is thus advertised:—

‘The Princess of Wales Yacht, J. Chapman, W. Bourn, master, by divine permission, will leave Ralph’s Quay every Friday, 11.’ &c. &c. *Ev. Mag.*, July.

After the specimens we have given of these people, anything which is said of their activity can very easily be credited. The army and navy appear to be particular objects of their attention

*British Navy.*—It is with peculiar pleasure we insert the following extract of a letter from the pious chaplain of a man-of-war, to a gentleman at Gosport, intimating the power and grace of God manifested towards our brave seamen. ‘*Off Cadiz, Nov. 26, 1806.*—My dear friend—A fleet for England found us in the night, and is just going

away. I have only time to tell you that the work of God seems to prosper. Many are under convictions;—some, I trust, are converted. I preach every night, and am obliged to have a private meeting afterwards with those who wish to speak about their souls. But my own health is suffering much, nor shall I probably be able long to bear it. The ship is like a tabernacle; and really there is much external reformation. Capt. — raises no objection. I have near a hundred hearers every night at six o'clock. How unworthy am I!—Pray for us.” *Ev. Mag.*, 84.

*The testimony of a profane Officer to the worth of pious Sailors.*

‘Mr. Editor—In the mouth of two or three witnesses a truth shall be established. I recently met with a pleasing confirmation of a narrative stated some time since in your Magazine. I was surprised by a visit from an old acquaintance of mine, the other day, who is now an officer of rank in his Majesty’s navy. In the course of conversation, I was shocked at the profane oaths that perpetually interrupted his sentences; and took an opportunity to express my regret that such language should be so common among so valuable a body of men. ‘Sir,’ said he, still interspersing many solemn imprecations, ‘an officer cannot live at sea. without swearing; not one of my men would mind a word without an oath; it is common sea-language. If we were not to swear, the rascals would take us for lubbers, stare in our faces, and leave us to do our commands ourselves. I never knew but one exception; and that was extraordinary. I declare, believe me ‘tis true (suspecting that I might not credit it); there was a set of fellows called *Methodists*, on board the *Victory*, Lord Nelson’s ship (to be sure he was rather a religious man himself!) and those men never wanted swearing at. The dogs were the best seamen on board. Every man *knew* his duty, and every man *did* his duty. They used to meet together and sing hymns; and nobody dared molest them. The commander would not have suffered it, had they attempted it. They were allowed a mess by themselves and never mixed with the other men. I have often heard them singing away myself; and ‘tis true, I assure you, but not one of them was either killed or wounded at the battle of Trafalgar, though they did their duty as well as any men. No, not one of the psalm-singing gentry was even hurt; and there the fellows are swimming away in the Bay of Biscay at this very time, singing like the d——. They are now under a new commander; but still are allowed the same privileges, and mess by themselves. These were the only fellows that I ever knew do their duty without swearing; and I will do them the justice to say they do it.’ J. C.’ *Ev. Mag.*, pp. 119, 120.

These people are spread over the face of the whole earth in the shape of missionaries.—Upon the subject of missions we shall say very little or nothing at present, because we reserve it for another article in a subsequent Number. But we cannot help remarking the magnitude of the collections made in favour of the missionaries at the Methodistical chapels, when compared with the collections for any common object of charity in the orthodox churches and chapels.

*Religious Tract Society.*—A most satisfactory Report was presented by the Committee; from which it appeared, that, since the commencement of the Institution in the year 1799, upwards of *Four Millions* of Religious Tracts have been issued under the auspices of the Society; and that considerably more than one fourth of that number have been sold during the last year.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 284.

These tracts are dropped in villages by the Methodists, and thus every chance for conversion afforded to the common people. There is a proposal in one of the numbers of the volumes before us, that travellers, for every pound they spent upon the road, should fling one shilling’s worth of these tracts out of the chaise window;— thus taxing his pleasures at *5 per cent.* for the purposes of doing good.

‘Every Christian who expects the protection and blessing of God, ought to take with him as many *shillings’ worth*, at least, of cheap Tracts to throw on the road and leave at inns, as he takes out pounds to expend on himself and family. This is really but a trifling sacrifice. It is a highly reasonable one; and one which God will accept.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 405.

*It is part of their policy to have a great change of Ministers.*

‘Same day, the Rev. W. Haward, from Hoxton Academy, was ordained over the independent church at Rendham, Suffolk. Mr. Pickles, of Walpole, began with prayer and reading: Mr. Price, of Woodbridge, delivered the introductory discourse, and asked the questions; Mr. Dennant, of Halesworth, offered the ordination prayer; *Mr. Shufflebottom, of Bungay, gave the charge* from - Acts, xx. 28; Mr. Vincent, of Deal, the general prayer; and Mr. Walford, of Yarmouth, preached to the people from 2 Phil. ii. 16.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 429.

‘*Chapels opened.*—Hambledon, Bucks, Sept. 22.—Eighteen months ago, this parish was destitute of the gospel: the people have now one of the Rev. G. Collison’s students, the Rev. Mr. Eastmead, settled among them. Mr. English of Wooburn, and Mr. Frey, preached on the occasion; and Mr. Jones, of London, Mr. Churchill, of Henley, Mr. Redford, of Windsor, and Mr. Barratt, now of Petersfield, prayed.’ *Ev. Mag.*, p. 533.

*Methodism in his Majesty’s ship Tonnant—a Letter from the sailmaker.*

‘It is with great satisfaction that I can now inform you God has deigned, in a yet greater degree, to own the weak efforts of his servant to turn many from Satan to himself. Many are called here, as is plain to be seen, by their pensive looks and deep sighs. And if they would be obedient to the heavenly call instead of grieving the Spirit of grace, I dare say we should soon have near half the ship’s company brought to God. I doubt not, however, but, as I have cast my bread upon the waters, it will be found after many days. Our 13 are now increased to upwards of 30. Surely the Lord delighteth not in the death of him that dieth.’ *Meth. Mag.*, p. 188.

It appears also from p. 193, *Meth. Mag.*, that the same principles prevail on board his Majesty’s ship *Sea-horse*, 44 guns. And in one part of the *Ev. Mag.* great hopes are entertained of the 25th regiment. We believe this is the number: but we quote this fact from memory.

We must remember, in addition to these trifling specimens of their active disposition, that the Methodists have found a powerful party in the House of Commons, who, by the neutrality which they affect, and partly adhere to, are courted both by ministers and opposition; that they have gained complete possession of the India House; and under the pretence, or perhaps with the serious intention, of educating young people for India, will take care to introduce (as much as they dare without provoking attention) their own particular tenets. In fact, one thing must always be taken for granted respecting these people,—that, wherever they gain a footing, or whatever be the institutions to which they give birth, *proselytism will be their main object*; everything else is a mere instrument—this is their principal aim. When every proselyte is not only an addition to their temporal power, but when the act of conversion which gains a vote, saves (as they suppose) a soul from destruction,—it is quite needless to state, that every faculty of their minds will be dedicated to this most important of all temporal and eternal concerns.

Their attack upon the Church is not merely confined to publications; it is generally understood that they have a very considerable fund for the purchase of livings, to which of course, ministers of their own profession are always presented.

Upon the foregoing facts, and upon the spirit evinced by these extracts, we shall make a few comments.

1. It is obvious, that this description of Christians entertain very erroneous and dangerous notions of the present judgments of God. A belief that Providence interferes in all the little actions of our lives, refers all merit and demerit to bad and good fortune; and causes the successful man to be always considered as a good man, and the unhappy man as the object of divine vengeance. It furnishes ignorant and designing men with a power which is sure to be abused : —the cry of, a *judgment*, a

*judgment*, it is always easy to make, but not easy to resist. It encourages the grossest superstitions; for if the Deity rewards and punishes on every slight occasion, it is quite impossible, but that such a helpless being as man will set himself at work to discover the will of Heaven in the appearances of outward nature, and to apply all the phenomena of thunder, lightning, wind, and every striking appearance to the regulation of his conduct; as the poor Methodist, when he rode into Piccadilly in a thunder storm, and imagined that all the uproar of the elements was a mere hint to him not to preach at Mr. Romaine's chapel. Hence a great deal of error, and a great deal of secret misery. This doctrine of a theocracy must necessarily place an excessive power in the hands of the clergy; it applies so instantly and so tremendously to men's hopes and fears, that it must make the priest omnipotent over the people, as it always has done where it has been established. It has a great tendency to check human exertions, and to prevent the employment of those secondary means of effecting an object which Providence has placed in our power. The doctrine of the immediate, and perpetual interference of Divine Providence, is not true. If two men travel the same road, the one to rob the other to relieve a fellow-creature who is starving; will any but the most fanatic contend, that they do not both run the same chance of falling over a stone, and breaking their legs? and is not matter of fact, that the robber often returns safe, and the just man sustains the injury? Have not the soundest divines of both churches always urged this unequal distribution of good and evil, in the present state, as one of the strongest natural arguments for a future state of retribution? Have not they contended, and well, and admirably contended, that the supposition of such a state is absolutely necessary to our notion of the justice of God,—absolutely necessary to restore order to that moral confusion which we all observe and deplore in the present world? The man who places religion upon a false basis is the greatest enemy to religion. If victory is always to the just and good,—how is the fortune of impious conquerors to be accounted for? Why do they erect dynasties, and found families which last for centuries? The reflecting mind whom you have instructed in this manner, and for present effect only, naturally comes upon you hereafter with difficulties of this sort; he finds he has been deceived; and you will soon discover that, in breeding up a fanatic, you have unwittingly laid the foundation of an atheist. The honest and the orthodox method is to prepare young people for the world, as it actually exists to tell them that they will often find vice perfectly successful, virtue exposed to a long train of afflictions; that they must bear this patiently, and look to another world for its rectification.

2. The second doctrine which it is necessary to notice among the Methodists is, the doctrine of inward impulse and emotions, which, it is quite plain, must lead, if universally insisted upon, and preached among the common people, to every species of folly and enormity. When a human being believes that his internal feelings are the monitions of God, and that these monitions must govern his conduct; and when a great stress is purposely laid upon these inward feelings in all the discourses from the pulpit; it is, of course, impossible to say to what a pitch of extravagance mankind may not be carried, under the influence of such dangerous doctrines.
3. The Methodists hate pleasure and amusements; no theatre, no cards, no dancing, no punchinello, no dancing dogs, no blind fiddlers;—all the amusements of the rich and of the poor must disappear, wherever these gloomy people get a footing. It is not the abuse of pleasure which they attack, but the interspersions of pleasure, however much it is guarded by good sense and moderation;—it is not only wicked to hear the licentious plays of Congreve, but wicked to hear *Henry the Fifth*, or *The School for Scandal*;—it is not only dissipated to run about to all the parties in London and Edinburgh—but dancing is not *fit for a being who is preparing himself for Eternity*. *Ennui*, wretchedness, melancholy, groans and sighs, are the offerings which these unhappy men make to a Deity who has covered the earth with gay colours, and

scented it with rich perfumes; and shown us, by the plan and order of his works, that he has given to man something better than a bare existence, and scattered over his creation a thousand superfluous joys which are totally unnecessary to the mere support of life.

4. The Methodists lay very little stress upon practical righteousness. They do not say to their people, Do not be deceitful; do not be idle; get rid of your bad passions; or at least (if they do say these things) they say them very seldom. Not that they preach faith without works; for if they told the people that they might rob and murder with impunity, the civil magistrate must be compelled to interfere with such doctrine: — but they say a great deal about faith, and very little about works. What are commonly called the mysterious parts of our religion are brought into the foreground, much more than the doctrines which lead to practice;—and this among the lowest of the community.

The Methodists have hitherto been accused of dissenting from the Church of England. This, as far as relates to mere subscription to articles, is not true; but they differ in their choice of the articles upon which they dilate and expand, and to which they appear to give a preference, from the stress which they place upon them. There is nothing heretical in saying that God *sometimes* intervenes with his special providence; but these people differ from the Established Church, in the degree in which they insist upon this doctrine. In the hands of a man of sense and education, it is a safe doctrine; in the management of the Methodists, we have seen how ridiculous and degrading it becomes. In the same manner, a clergyman of the Church of England would not do his duty if he did not insist upon the necessity of faith as well as of good works; but as he believes that it is much more easy to give credit to doctrines than to live well, he labours most in those points where human nature is the *most* liable to prove defective. Because he does so, he is accused of giving up the articles of his faith, by men who have their partialities also in doctrine; but partialities, not founded upon the same sound discretion, and knowledge of human nature.

5. The Methodists are always desirous of making men more religious than it is possible, from the constitution of human nature, to make them. If they could succeed as much as they wish to succeed, there would be at once an end of delving and spinning, and of every exertion of human industry. Men must eat, and drink, and work; and if you wish to fix upon them high and elevated notions, as the *ordinary* furniture of their minds, you do these two things;—you drive men of warm temperaments mad,—and you introduce, in the rest of the world, a low and shocking familiarity with words and images, which every real friend to religion would wish to keep sacred. *The friends of the dear Redeemer who are in the habit of visiting the Isle of Thanet*—(as in the extract we have quoted)—Is it possible that this mixture of the most awful, with the most familiar images, so common among Methodists now, and with the enthusiasts in the time of Cromwell, must not, in the end, divest religion of all the deep and solemn impressions which it is calculated to produce? In a man of common imagination (as we have before observed), the terror, and the feeling which it first excited, must necessarily be soon separated: but, where the fervour of impression is long preserved, piety ends in Bedlam. Accordingly, there is not a madhouse in England, where a considerable part of the patients have not been driven to insanity by the extravagance of these people. We cannot enter such places without seeing a number of honest artisans, covered with blankets, and calling themselves angels and apostles, who, if they had remained contented with the instruction of men of learning and education, would still have been sound masters of their own trade, sober Christians, and useful members of society.

6. It is impossible not to observe how directly all the doctrine of the Methodists is calculated to gain power among the poor and ignorant. To say, that the Deity governs this world by general rules, and that we must wait for another and a final scene of existence, before vice meets with its merited punishment, and virtue with its merited reward; to preach this up daily would not add a single votary to the Tabernacle, nor sell a number of the Methodistical Magazine:—but, to publish an account of a man who was cured of scrofula by a single sermon—of Providence destroying the innkeeper at Garstang for appointing a cock-fight near the Tabernacle;— this promptness of judgment and immediate execution is so much like human justice, and so much better adapted to vulgar capacities, that the system is at once admitted, as soon as any one can be found who is impudent or ignorant enough to teach it; and, being once admitted, it produces too strong an effect upon the passions to be easily relinquished. The case is the same with the doctrine of inward impulse, or, as they term it, experience. If you preach up to ploughmen and artisans, that every singular feeling which comes across them is a visitation of the Divine Spirit—can there be any difficulty, *under* the influence of this nonsense, in converting these simple creatures into active and mysterious fools, and making them your slaves for life? It is not possible to raise up any dangerous enthusiasm, by telling men to be just, and good, and charitable; but keep this part of Christianity out of sight—and talk long and enthusiastically, before ignorant people, of the mysteries of our religion, and you will not fail to attract a crowd of followers:—verily the Tabernacle loveth not that which is simple, intelligible, and leadeth to good sound practice.

Having endeavoured to point out the spirit which pervades these People, we shall say a few words upon the causes, the effects, and the cure of this calamity.—The fanaticism so prevalent in the present day, is one of those evils from which society is never wholly exempt, but which bursts out at different periods, with peculiar violence, and sometimes overwhelms everything in its course. The last eruption took place about a century and a half ago, and destroyed both Church and Throne with its tremendous force. Though irresistible, it was short: enthusiasm spent its force—the usual reaction took place; and England was deluged with ribaldry and indecency, because it had been worried with fanatical restrictions. By degrees, however, it was found out, that orthodoxy and loyalty might be secured by other methods than licentious conduct and immodest conversation. The public morals improved; and there appeared as much good sense and moderation upon the subject of religion as ever can be expected from mankind in large masses. Still, however, the mischief which the Puritans had done was not forgotten; a general suspicion prevailed of the dangers of religious enthusiasm; and the fanatical preacher wanted his accustomed power among a people recently recovered from a religious war, and guarded by songs, proverbs, popular stories, and the general tide of humour and opinion, against all excesses of that nature. About the middle of the last century, however, the character of the genuine fanatic was a good deal forgotten; and the memory of the civil wars worn away; the field was clear for extravagance in piety; and causes, which must always produce an immense influence upon the mind of man, were left to their own unimpeded operations. Religion is so noble and powerful a consideration—it is so buoyant and so insubmergible—that it may be made, by fanatics, to carry with it any degree of error and of perilous absurdity. In this instance Messrs. Whitfield and Wesley happened to begin. They were men of considerable talents; they observed the common decorums of life, they did not run naked into the streets, or pretend to the prophetic character;—and therefore they were not committed to Newgate. They preached with great energy to weak people; who first stared—then listened—then believed—then felt the inward feeling of grace, and became as foolish as their teachers could possibly wish them to be:—in short, folly ran its ancient course,—and human nature evinced itself to be what it always has been under similar circumstances. The great and permanent cause, therefore, of the increase of Methodism, is the cause which has given birth to fanaticism in all ages,—the *facility of mingling human errors with the fundamental truths of*

*religion.* The formerly imperfect residence of the clergy may, perhaps, in some trifling degree, have aided this source of Methodism. But unless a man of education, and a gentleman, could stoop to such disingenuous arts as the Methodist preachers,—unless he hears heavenly music all of a sudden, and enjoys *sweet experiences*,—it is quite impossible that he can contend against such artists as these. More active than they are at present the clergy might perhaps be; but the calmness and moderation of an Establishment can never possibly be a match for sectarian activity.—If the common people are *ennui'd* with the fine acting of Mrs. Siddons, they go to Sadler's Wells. The subject is too serious for ludicrous comparisons:— but the Tabernacle really is to the Church, what Sadler's Wells is to the Drama. There, popularity is gained by vaulting and tumbling, —by low arts, which the regular clergy are not too idle to have recourse to, but too dignified: —their institutions are chaste and severe, —they endeavour to do that which, *upon the whole, and for a great number of years*, will be found to be the most admirable and the most useful: it is no part of their plan to descend to small artifices, for the sake of present popularity and effect. The religion of the common people under the government of the Church may remain as it is for ever;—enthusiasm must be progressive, or it will expire.

It is probable that the dreadful scenes which have lately been acted in the world, and the dangers to which we are exposed, have increased the numbers of the Methodists. To what degree will Methodism extend in this country?—This question is not easy to answer. That it has rapidly increased within these few years, we have no manner of doubt; and we confess we cannot see what is likely to impede its progress. The party which it has formed in the Legislature; and the artful neutrality with which they give respectability to their small number,—the talents of some of this party, and the unimpeached excellence of their characters, all make it probable that fanaticism will increase rather than diminish. The Methodists have made an alarming inroad into the Church, and they are attacking the army and navy. The principality of Wales, and the East India Company they have already acquired. All mines and subterraneous places belong to them; they creep into hospitals and small schools, and so work their way upwards. It is the custom of the religious neutrals to beg all the little livings, particularly in the north of England, from the minister for the time being; and from these fixed points they make incursions upon the happiness and common sense of the vicinage. We most sincerely deprecate such an event; but it will excite in us no manner of surprise, if a period arrives when the churches of the sober and orthodox part of the English clergy are completely deserted by the middling and lower classes of the community. We do not prophesy any such event; but we contend that it is not impossible,—hardly improbable. If such, in future, should be the situation of this country, it is impossible to say what political animosities may not be ingrafted upon this marked and dangerous division of mankind into the *godly* and the *ungodly*. At all events, we are quite sure that happiness will be destroyed, reason degraded, sound religion banished from the world; and that when fanaticism becomes too foolish and too prurient to be endured (as is at last sure to be the case), it will be succeeded by a long period of the grossest immorality, atheism, and debauchery.

We are not sure that this evil admits of any cure,—or of any considerable palliation. We most sincerely hope that the government of this country will never be guilty of such indiscretion as to tamper with the Toleration Act, or to attempt to put down these follies by the intervention of the law. If experience has taught us anything, it is the absurdity of controlling men's notions of eternity by acts of Parliament. Something may perhaps be done, in the way of ridicule, towards turning the popular opinion. It may be as well to extend the privileges of the dissenters to the members of the Church of England; for, as the law now stands, any man who dissents from the Established Church may open a place of worship where he pleases. No orthodox clergyman can do so, without the consent of the parson of the parish,—who always refuses, because he does not choose to have his monopoly disturbed; and refuses in parishes where there are not

accommodations for one half of the persons who wish to frequent the Church of England, and in instances where he knows that the chapels from which he excludes the established worship will be immediately occupied by sectaries. It may be as well to encourage in the early education of the clergy, as Mr. Ingram recommends, a better and more animated method of preaching; and it may be necessary, hereafter, if the evil gets to a great height, to relax the articles of the English Church, and to admit a greater variety of Christians within the pale. The greatest and best of all remedies, is perhaps the education of the poor;—we are astonished, that the Established Church in England is not awake to this mean of arresting the progress of Methodism. Of course, none of these things will be done; nor is it *clear*, if they were done, that they would do *much* good. Whatever happens, we are for common sense and orthodoxy. Insolence, servile politics, and the spirit of persecution, we condemn and attack, whenever we observe them; but to the learning, the moderation, and the rational piety of the Establishment, we most earnestly wish a decided victory over the nonsense, the melancholy, and the madness of the Tabernacle.\*

God send that our wishes be not in vain.

\*There is one circumstance to which we have neglected to advert in the proper place,—the dreadful pillage of the earnings of the poor which is made by the Methodists. A case is mentioned in one of the numbers of these two magazines for 1807, of a poor man with a family, earning only twenty-eight shillings a week, *who has made two donations of ten guineas each to the missionary fund!*