

light of a curious problem, which the historian, the politician, the philosopher, and the Christian are alike concerned to solve. It will soon appear that Wesley was no ordinary fanatic—that methodism, in his hands, was not a mere religious faction, begotten by pride, and nursed by ambition and hypocrisy; that he laboured sincerely to improve his fellow creatures by the application of that remedy which God himself has given us, and that his virtues and vices, his opinions and actions, his success and his failure are interesting to every friend to Christianity and to mankind.

The shortest and best method of establishing this position, will be to take a brief view of Wesley's life. Some remarks upon his character may be introduced as we proceed; and the more particular consideration of his doctrine, and system, its origin, and its consequences, its merits, and its defects, shall be resumed in the next Number of our Review. The founder of the Methodists, says Mr. Southey, was emphatically of a good family, in the sense wherein he himself would have used the term; his father, grand-father, and great grand-father were all clergymen. The second was patronised in the time of the Commonwealth by the famous John Owen; was ejected for non-conformity at the period of the Restoration, and died at the age of thirty-three, leaving two sons. The younger of these, disgusted by the violence of the party among which he had been brought up, was reconciled in his youth to the Church, and continued through life a zealous Churchman. At Oxford, he supported himself, while an under-graduate, by giving instruction to others; and after he had been two years in orders, he settled upon a curacy in the metropolis, and married a daughter of Dr. Annesley, one of the ejected ministers. Mrs. Wesley, like her husband, had renounced the dissenters in early youth; and, like him, was remarkable for a strong understanding, and a pious blameless life. They had no less than nineteen children; but only three sons and three daughters seem to have grown up.

Mr. Wesley was thought capable of forwarding the plans of James II. and preferment was offered to him if he would preach in their behalf. But, instead of accepting the offer, he refused to read the King's declaration—preached pointedly against his conduct; and when the Revolution was effected, was the first who wrote in its defence, and was rewarded with the living of Epworth, in Lincolnshire. The rectory of another small parish in the same county, was the