

## METHODISM AND THE MAN

THE movement which culminated in the organization of Methodism originated largely because a certain man, having a vision of what a man *ought* to be, set himself to realize the possibilities open to him, and moved other men to seek for themselves similar good.

Without such a vision of possibilities in character the Holy Club had perhaps never been formed. The supreme desire of the Wesleys was to make actual in human character and action the *goodness* which had become an imperative necessity to them as *men* anxious to serve God and accomplish the mission to which they felt themselves called to their generation. Personal goodness was *first* in their thought, desire and purpose. For this they set themselves to earnest study and prayer.

Methodism developed as Wesley's vision of a man's possibilities of goodness in personal character became actual in men's experiences. The few men comprising the Holy Club at Oxford saw that there was a whole Brotherhood of need about them. What they realized as supreme in their own hearts and lives they likewise saw to be vital to their fellow men. Having in measure met their own want, they instinctively set about meeting the wants of their fellows. In this way the early stages of Methodism were passed. By similar processes Methodist Societies grew until millions came to realize just what John Wesley and his little band of seekers after God had first sought after. The message of Methodist pioneers was mightily attractive to thousands because of its virility and strength. It centred in a holy character, it called men to high endeavor, it sought

to project itself into every phase of human progress for the betterment of men in every condition of life; in short, it aimed to meet man's complex needs, and because it did this better than anything else of its times it prospered and grew to wonderful dimensions until it had spread itself over practically the whole world.

John Wesley was a man of great comprehension, both as to the need of his fellows and the best way to meet it. He saw where the chief trouble lay and aimed above all things to remove it. His one outstanding characteristic in all this was thoroughness. He had no place for compromise. Where a man's character was evil, nothing less than complete cleansing would suffice. Where human society was bad, nothing short of regeneration of the principles of conduct that lay at its very heart was sufficient. The men of our day need just such a thoroughgoing message as the early Methodists made so prominent in their appeal.

As I interpret it, the Message of Methodism to men is five-fold. It says to each:

1. You are an intelligent and free moral agent with an immortal nature that requires something more than temporal or temporary provision.

2. That moral nature, defiled though it may be by the power of sin, may be cleansed by the regenerating influence of the atonement of Jesus Christ.

3. In the Standard of Character set before you in the earthly life and teachings of Jesus you see what you should seek to become as a man, called to be a son of God.

4. By the power of the Holy Spirit you may be brought into inward conformity to this Standard of Righteousness.



IN STANLEY PARK, VANCOUVER

Photo by the Editor.